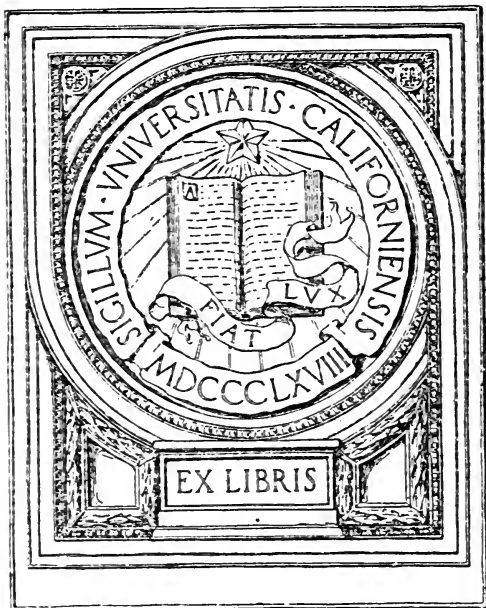
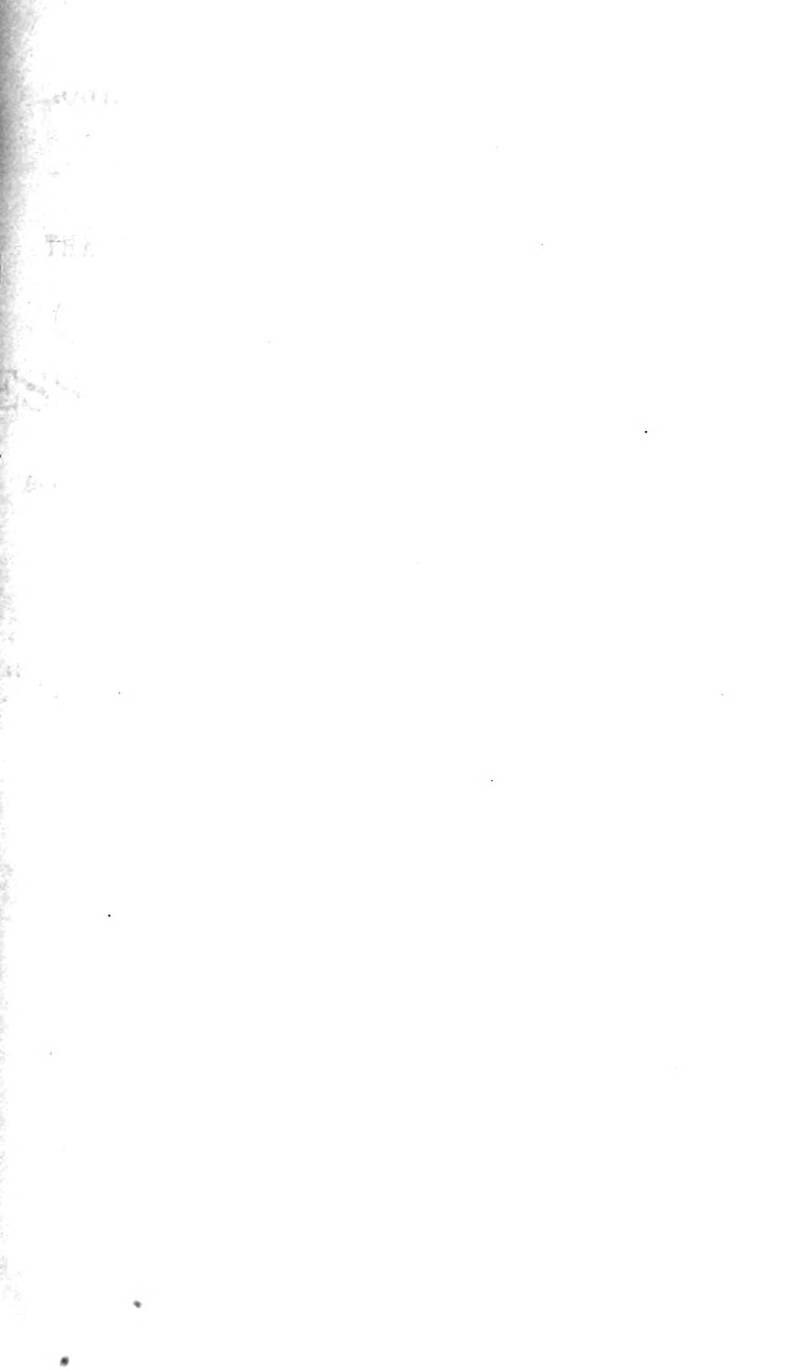


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PROGRESS OF RELIGION

AS ILLUSTRATED IN

THE PROTESTANT CHURCH OF FRANCE;

BEING

ESSAYS & REVIEWS,

Bearing on the chief Religious Questions of the day,

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH;

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY ON

“THE OXFORD ESSAYS & REVIEWS”

BY THE EDITOR,

JOHN R. BEARD, D.D.

Fides intellectum amplexans.

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PREFACE.

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The following pieces (except the last) are translated from *La Revue de Théologie et de la Philosophie Chrétienne*, the first volume of which appeared in the year 1850. Continued down to the present, that periodical now bears the title of *Nouvelle Revue de Théologie*.* The leading object of the work is stated in the first essay, entitled, "Views and Aims," by its original editor, T. Colani. Those "Views and Aims" have, with some variety, been developed and laid before the public under the able and judicious direction of the editor, aided by various eminent, liberal, and earnest members of the French Protestant Church. From the writings of the most distinguished of the contributors, these Essays and Reviews have been selected. The primary object of the volume is to place before the English public an important phase of religious thought. Having for some time contemplated doing this, I have been hindered until the present moment; and now I congratulate myself that the volume appears in the midst of a not uncongenial religious movement, and may, with God's blessing, do something to promote it. The externalities of popular systems of religion have in this country received a blow from which they will not recover, at the hands of the authors of "Essays and Reviews." In the direction of that blow, parts of this volume are designed to work, in particular, the essay on the "Errata of the New Testament," and that entitled "Theological Conversations." But while the Oxford "Essays and Reviews" are effective in either undermining or battering down strongholds of religious falsity, they scarcely present the positive side of true religion with sufficient fulness and prominence. Yet the most effectual way to displace error, is to place truth in the human

* STRASBURG, Treuttel et Wurtz; LONDON, David Nutt, 270 Strand.

mind. The present volume therefore exhibits the Gospel in most of its important aspects—first, God, and God's relation to the universe, and especially to the human mind; second, Christ, and his true and rightful authority in the soul; third, Christ's religion in its essential harmony with science; fourth, Revelation in its general character, and in its particular exhibition in the Bible, leading to direct and distinct statements of what the Bible is, and what the Bible contains. It is a distinguishing peculiarity of the system of religious thought here expounded to hold that the Gospel is self-evidencing, and so needs no outward testimony or support. Yet there are miracles in the Bible. Especially do the miracles of Jesus Christ demand attentive study. The essay on the subject does something toward exhibiting their real nature and their true value in a discriminating manner, and in a spirit alike of free enquiry and reverent faith. This essay, it is thought, may serve to qualify and supplement the piece contributed by the late Professor Powell to the "Essays and Reviews." A view of the spiritual conception of Christianity presented by the liberal writers in the *Nouvelle Revue de Théologie*, and as the writer believes, greatly needed in the present state of religion in this country, would have been more defective than that here offered to the public, had these pages not contained the brief but valuable piece on "The Simplicity of the Gospel;" nor would this picture of the new French school of thought have been complete, nor could the full impression hoped for in this country have been produced, had not the contrast been exhibited, which appears in the biographical notice of Calvin, as between the new, fresh, and vigorous forms of religious thought and sentiment, and the decaying ones of a traditional and exploded theology. In this brief account of the objects and contents of the volume I now put forth, I must not omit to state that while keeping my eye fixed on the improvement and wants of what is commonly called "the religious world," I have not overlooked those of the world which professes to do without religion. I hope that the earlier of the compositions which ensue may help to counteract the materialistic and infidel tendencies and efforts of the present day which are by no means confined to England, but which, wherever they are active, make a desert which their advocates erroneously denominate peace.

Among the hopes that I cherish in the labour of love in which I
Lars engage is that of contributing to bring into closer alliance, and :

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mer and more practical sympathy, the cultured and noble representatives of free religious thought and earnest religious life, that are now actively working for God and Christ, in France, England, and the United States. Actuated by that hope, I have written and published the Introductory Essay, in which I endeavour to report in a way to be generally understood, what the much decried "Reviews and Essays" really are, what they teach, and what they will do.

In translating and editing this volume, I have acted simply as a reporter, except in the parts in which I express my own opinion. In very much of what is here contained, I, reporter though I am, entirely concur. To other parts my adherence is qualified. From some things I dissent more or less. I commit the whole to the public in the hope that it will contribute to the advancement of a free and truly spiritual Christianity.

Lower Broughton, near Manchester,
April 21st, 1861.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES OF THE CONTRIBUTORS.

By A. REVILLE, D.D.,

MINISTER AT ROTTERDAM.

I.

Mons. ERNEST RENAN, member of the institute, at the present moment the first orientalist in France, perhaps the best writer and the most generally liked by readers of refinement, is of Breton origin, and descended from a very Catholic family. He was himself destined for the career of the Church, and studied with this view at St. Sulpice, at Paris, with the fathers of the oratory. His penetration, his precocious intellect, his zeal for study, caused his instructors to entertain the highest hopes of him. Unfortunately for them, the love of knowledge brought the young Levite within the sphere of German erudition and criticism. He lost under that influence, his Catholic faith, and almost, it may be said, his religious faith. One thing however saved him from this —his exquisite feeling for the beautiful in history, in art, and in the soul of man, and often, pagan by his intellect, he became more and more Christian by his heart. Having been named to an appointment in the Imperial Library of Paris, he found there all the time and all the assistance necessary to

the development of his critical studies. His connections and his tastes constantly drew him more toward the society of liberal Protestants. He married a Miss Scheffer, the niece of the celebrated Ary Scheffer. His works, already numerous, are published by M. M. Levy Frères. They are—

Studies of Religious History4th edition.

On the Origin of Language.....3rd edition.

Averroës and Averroism.....2nd edition.

History and Comparative System of the Shemitic

Languages.....2nd edition.

(THE WORK WHICH OBTAINED THE PRIZE OF THE INSTITUTE.)

The Book of Job.....2nd edition.

Essays on Morals and Criticism.....2nd edition.

Solomon's Song1st edition.

It would be going much too far to consider E. Renan altogether one of our church. He has retained, from the crises through which he passed, a leaven of scepticism which will not be removed all at once. In any case, as time advances he is continually coming nearer to us, and we feel that he considers himself already as swimming in the same seas. He protects and defends us on all occasions, and it is to him that I owe it to have been admitted into the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, a position very much desired in France, and very difficult to obtain, especially for a Protestant theologian. The Catholics have complete liberty to speak or write against their own church, but they do not like to hear the same things said by a Protestant. E. Renan is at present (March, 1861). in Syria on a scientific mission from government. His special object is to study on the spot the Phenician antiquities. He is a man yet young, and though to a certain extent worn by study and work, one who will do much in the future. In his last work he pronounces himself decidedly in favour of Christian history, of the Protestant Church, and of Protestant

science, and promises them the future. He is in bad repute among the orthodox, Catholic and Protestant, by whom he is much misrepresented.

II.

MONS. EDMOND SCHERER, D.D., formerly professor of theology in the University of Geneva. His debut corresponded with the hopes of his orthodox supporters. He was zealous against his theological antagonists and their friends. But by degrees, rumours began to be circulated respecting modifications which were taking place in his views. It was especially towards the central point of the inspiration and the authority of the Bible that these rumours pointed, in respect to heterodoxy of the young professor. Soon there was no doubt about the matter. Under the influence of German criticism, M. Scherer rejected miraculous inspiration, and the divinity of the canon, and even denied the correctness of the principle of authority in matters of faith. Great was the scandal. The professor was led to resign, and the *Revue de Théologie* was commenced at Strasburg. The old liberal party triumphed in the wound which had thus been inflicted on its adversaries, but soon perceived with anxiety that the venom was spreading among its own ranks, particularly among the young theologians. This is where we now are. In fact orthodoxy has taken lower ground. It endures Semi-Arians in its communion and strangely enough on the other hand it adopts the Arminianism theory against the moral necessity asserted by the new school, which in this point, more readily recognises the relative truth of the old Calvinism, without, however, agreeing with the *Dfecretum Horribile*. On its side, the old liberal party is being divided, the one portion uniting

itself to this moderate orthodoxy, in order to exclude us from the Church, the other portion, desiring to preserve us in the ranks, and becoming insensibly leavened with our ideas and our principles. M. Scherer, since his resignation, has held himself aloof from any direct participation in the state Church, and since the polemical discussions of the commencement, has written little else than critical articles, or dogmatic essays, such as may be read in the *Revue de Théologie*. As a writer, he is serious, thorough, concise, and a little abstract. He excels in literary criticism, and has published some very remarkable articles of this class in the *Bibliothèque Universelle* of Geneva, a monthly publication. They have been indeed so much noticed that I may announce to you that he will soon take his place also in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, in which he will write on philosophical and literary subjects. He is perhaps rather too much discouraged by the obstacles which his views have met with in the Church. His most important works have been collected in a volume, entitled *Miscellanies of Religious Criticism*, (Paris : Levy Frères), which appeared last year.

III.

Mons. A. GROTZ, pastor at Nismes, and a pupil of the college of Montauban, was at first much under the influence of A. Monod (the great orthodox professor and preacher) and who, like many of his fellow students, was carried away by the theological earthquake, caused by the Scherer difficulty. He is said to be a very good preacher, and his writings bear the impress of a pious and liberal tone of thought, perhaps rather enthusiastic than severe.

MONS. T. COLANI, pastor at Strasburg. His family belongs to the most strict form of orthodoxy, and he himself long held the same views. But his sincere and independent mind, his residence at Strasburg, on the very borders of Germany, the lessons of professor Reuss, and his own reflections separated him from this form of belief, and intimately connected with Scherer, he was his principal ally on his rupture with orthodoxy. His theological writings are to be found in the *Revue de Théologie*. A certain flavor of the *Evangelical Alliance* gives a certain originality to his views, otherwise so broad and advanced. Unfortunately he *was poor*, and *was* compelled to give lessons for a livelihood. He was born to be a professor, and he hoped to become one at Strasburg. By a thousand intrigues his religious opponents have succeeded as yet in closing against him the doors of the academy. It is one of the difficulties of our position in France that at every turn we are obliged to choose between complete freedom and our most pressing personal necessities. But a new course was opened for him. On the occasion of the illness of a pastor at Strasburg, Colani was induced to preach a few times. He did not believe himself fitted for it, but he made the attempt, animated by the secret desire of proving that it was possible to preach with profit before man and in the presence of God, according to the principles of the new theology. To the general surprise, his sermons had a prodigious success. The Lutheran Directory, (I must tell you that in France, great importance is not attached to the distinction between the *Reformed* and the *Lutheran Churches*), under the influence of orthodoxy, dared not give him a place in the pulpit; but public opinion, and among other things, a petition signed by a very large number of members of the church, had its effect on the Directory, and carried the point. He has now a place as

pastor at Strasburg. *His published sermons form two volumes, and their sale has been as rapid as possible. One edition follows after another, and they contribute largely to disseminate our ideas among our theological readers.

v.

As to DR. SHOLTEN I must refer for everything relating to his ideas to my article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* upon the religious schools of Holland. He is without any doubt at the present moment the most distinguished theologian of that country, and he exercises an immense influence upon the young by his zeal and by his philosophic depths of thought. He is a man of ripe age, the son of a pastor liberal according to the old meaning of the word, and very well acquainted with the German philosophy. It is to him I owe my comprehension of it. Constantly exposed to the violent attacks of the orthodox and of the old liberals, he defends himself with a boldness and a success which disconcert his adversaries. Supported by his colleague Kuenen, who is a younger man, and whose special duty is criticism, strengthened also by the recent addition of one of his pupils, Professor Raunenhoff, for ecclesiastical history, he finds his position becoming stronger from day to day. He is in other respects a man of very simple tastes and in every sense lovable.

*A fact which lately occurred may serve as a commentary on this. some parties wished to procure the removal on the ground of heresy, of M. Pellisier, an eloquent preacher of Bordeaux, entirely of our views. Not only the majority of the Consistory refused point blank, but besides this, a petition signed by 450 men out of a church, which numbers perhaps 3000 souls, formally demanded of the Consistory to maintain him in the place. Facts like this are significant and encouraging.

I have not much to report respecting myself. I was born at Dieppe, in Normandy, the son of a pastor there, whose recent loss I am still mourning. My father brought me up in his own liberal ideas, as they were taught at Geneva. Whilst very heretical in matters of doctrine, I was quasi-orthodox in matters Biblical. My own reading, my knowledge of German, and the *Revue de Théologie* have brought me to the point at which I now am. Desirous, as far as might be in my power, of assisting in the revival of the Theology of French Protestantism, and in rectifying the common notions of Christianity I accepted a pastorship offered me at Rotterdam, in 1859, although out of my native land, in the hope that I might find there some time and more opportunities than in the most of the churches in France, to devote myself to this work. My hope has not been disappointed. I have succeeded in gaining for myself a certain name in connection with French Protestantism, and even beyond that limit. My writings in the *Lein*, *le Disciple de Jésus Christ*, the *Revue de Strasburg*, etc., etc., have contributed to propagate what I believe to be the truth, and have even drawn upon me the attentions of readers whom I little expected.; I mean men like Renan, Laboulaye, etc. who have opened to me the door of extensive Parisian publicity. I have entered in, and I quite hope to remain inside. I have made an opening through which better men than I am will pass, and I am well pleased at having been able to make it. Just now there is in the press at Leyden, a treatise of mine, on the Origin and Composition of the Gospel of Matthew, a treatise which I wrote in answer to a question proposed by a Theological Society of this country. My answer received the prize offered for competition, and has procured me the degree of Doctor of Theology. Four or five years ago, I was all but appointed professor at Montauban. Happily I

Le Lien

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was spared that misfortune. Montauban being the seat of authority where four or five ignoramuses set themselves up to lay down the law for the world, I should have been stifled in such a stove. From the seclusion of my Dutch study, I send forth my shafts against orthodoxy, when and how I will; four French Protestant Journals are at my disposal, the *Revue des Deux Mondes* and the *Revue Germanique* are open to me: what would I have more?*

*Dr. Réville, pastor at Rotterdam, besides contributing largely to the *Nouvelle Revue de Theologie* and the other periodicals which he mentions, is the author of a very instructive and interesting volume, entitled *Essais de Critique Religieuse; Paris, Cherbuliez*; the last Essay in which *Des Etudes Religieuses en France* contains much information illustrative of the main object of the present publication.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

ON

“ESSAYS AND REVIEWS.”

BY THE EDITOR.

“This presumptuous imposing of the senses of man upon the words of God, the special senses of man upon the general words of God, and laying them upon men’s consciences together under the equal penalty of death and damnation; this vain conceit that we can speak of the things of God better than in the words of God; this deifying our own interpretations, and tyrannous enforcing them upon others; this restraining of the word of God from the latitude and generality, and the understandings of men from that liberty, wherein Christ and the Apostles left them—is and hath been the only fountain of all the schisms of the Church, and that which makes them immortal.”—CHILLINGWORTH.

The two religious atmospheres of France and England offer at the present moment an interesting yet painful correspondence. They are both strongly marked by the signs of progress; they are both disturbed by passion, which attempts to resist the onward movement. The progress too in both instances has a similar origin and a similar tendency. Its origin is in the spirit of the age—a spirit which, being on the one side, a re-action against disbelief, is on the other, the child of mental freedom and improved methods of inquiry and modes of thought. This spirit is now passing over all civilised lands, levelling old and decaying systems of opinion and government, by calling into being a broader and higher life, mental, moral, and religious. Its continued existence and operation are as inevitable as its re-constructing power is certain and efficient. Naturally it calls forth opposition. In this opposition, too, France and England have points of agreement. The opposition there and here comes from the unin-

formed multitude ; from theologians who are ignorant of their science in its most advanced condition ; from speculatists who have voluntarily enclosed themselves within the net-work of the past, or who see so little ahead as to be afraid of looking boldly into the future ; or whose philosophy is so narrow and so shallow as to be alarmed at every new theory, whether it be of a successive and unbroken development of life, or of lost links in the chain of ever improving species ; from clergymen and dissenting ministers of all kinds, who, having closed their eyes against all the new light of the day, fondly think that the creeds and formularies to which they assented when young, contain absolute and unchangeable truth, and ought to satisfy others as completely as they satisfy themselves, and who in consequence are made both uncomfortable and angry at the in-coming novelties of form and substance. Yet these several classes are the leaders of public opinion in what is called the religious world. Easily therefore can they, as they have done, raise a storm of protestation and reproach against the modern prophets. Hence is it that in France a bare majority tries to clamour down and expel from their pastorships the ministers of the party of progress in the Protestant Church. And hence too is it that we see the clergy of England unhappily rising almost as one man, to assail by hard words a few of their brethren, who, knowing more than they, are valiant enough to tell the world what they know. The reactionary power, inasmuch as it is for the most part blind on the very topics on which it thinks it sees and certainly ought to see, would be neither formidable nor of long duration were it not concentrated and marshalled by an alliance which is called evangelical, and so called, we may presume, because the evangelists contain none of their peculiar notions. However, this society taking its stand on some one of the lessening forms of orthodoxy, and boldly identifying itself with the Gospel, in a style and temper worthy of the pope himself, busies itself in most European nations in putting forward its favourite articles of belief, and for that purpose, in withstanding every movement of free thought, and every manifestation of divergence from its own little stereotyped orthodoxy. For years it has been active in Germany and France in attempting to put a stop to theological individuality and spiritual emancipation. Partly by constant interference and personal influence, partly by liberal subsidies, it has zealously laboured to build a dam

against the rising and overflowing waters of divine truth. Of course the zeal has been spent in vain. The course of God's providence is not stopped by a staff of clerical agitators. While however they were intent in sealing theological eyes in Berlin, and making preparations for the same unchristian office at Geneva, lo ! of a sudden they are startled with insurrection at home. Seven men of might and valour within the well-fenced "Church of England" come forth of their own accord and declare to their fellow countrymen, and, through them, to the world, that the thinkers of society have outgrown the scholastic forms of the creeds, articles, and prayer-book ; that theology is on all sides undergoing a moulting ; and that those who would save their religion must fly to the mountains, where the air is pure and free, and where life is safe and vigorous. This proclamation they have made in a volume which they designate by the collective title of "Essays and Reviews." Some notice of these I have thought might not inappropriately stand here as a kind of introduction to similar papers, disclosing states of mind and religious endeavours in a neighbouring country, not a little resembling such as the English volume represents.

What are "Essays and Reviews," said a little boy to me recently, seeming to expect for answer that it was some newly-invented machine of war, or some newly-discovered beast of prey—something bad certainly. The curiosity of the child is become all but universal, thanks to the clergy of the country, who, when they take heartily to the business, are of all advertising mediums the most effectual, and never do they take to anything more kindly than when a new thought, or a free-spoken book has to be hunted down. What are "Essays and Reviews?" The question could receive an answer based on a personal knowledge from very few of its numerous clerical assailants, most of whom have condemned the book unseen, and unread, some without any acquaintance therewith, others with only such an acquaintance as can be gathered from extracts, made expressly for the purpose of procuring its condemnation. What the book really is, and what it teaches, can be exactly and thoroughly known only to those by whom

it is attentively perused. And if I now undertake to give some account of it I do so chiefly in the hope of augmenting its already large number of readers

The title "Essays and Reviews" is a little singular. Undescriptive, and unattractive as it is, it may have been taken from a modesty characteristic of sound learning and character, which instinctively shrink from display and parade.

The title may also indicate the origin of the contents of the volume—which are not without an appearance of having been so many essays and reviews contributed to one periodical or more. The supposition is confirmed by the matter which is one in its subject rather than in its treatment. To all appearance, the volume consists of a number of review articles collected and put together with only the one design of contributing to a revival of theological study and religious improvement in England. With this statement correspond the few words of explanation offered "To the Reader" by the authors themselves.

"It will be readily understood that the authors of the ensuing Essays are responsible for their respective articles only. They have written in entire independence of each other, and without concert or comparison. The volume, it is hoped, will be received as an attempt to illustrate the advantage derivable to the cause of a religious and moral truth from a free handling, in a becoming spirit, of subjects peculiarly liable to suffer by the repetition of conventional language, and from traditional methods of treatment."

Here we learn several things bearing on the purpose and aim of the authors :

1.—They desire to bring advantage to religious and moral truth.

2.—For that object they use the freedom which belongs to them as men and as Christian.

3.—That freedom is linked with reverence.

4.—That freedom eschews conventional language and traditional methods of treatment.

5.—The endeavour is made without any systematic or pre-concerted plan, so that there is here no attempt to form a school, or found a sect, but a simple utterance of truth for truth sake.

The authors are members of Oxford University, eminent alike for learning and character. One, Dr. Temple, is chap-

lain in ordinary to the Queen ; Head Master of Rugby school, and chaplain to the Earl of Denbigh. Another, Dr. Rowland Williams, is Vice-Principal, and professor of Hebrew, in St. David's College, Lampeter, Wales, and Vicar of Broad Chalke, Wilts. A third, Benjamin Jowitt, M.A., is Regius Professor of Greek, in the University of Oxford, and author of a translation and Commentary on Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians, Galatians, and Romans, which has reached a second edition. Men of this mark are not likely to put forth new and unpopular doctrines without a full and overpowering necessity. Their scholarship and habits of study give them the best opportunities of knowing the truth, and the personal, professional, and social restraints under which they act, guard them against rashness, and afford others an assurance that they speak nothing beyond what honesty compels them to speak. Such men deserve the attention they ask. They have gained attention far greater, probably, than they expected. The more thoughtful, the sound-hearted, the earnest lovers of truth, especially among our more cultivated laity, have, all over England, read the seven "Essays and Reviews" with a care and an appreciation well attested by the extraordinarily rapid sale of the volume.

With these preliminary explanations, as to what the book is, I proceed to state what the book teaches, and shall end by enquiring what the book will do.

Dr. Temple's essay, entitled "The Education of the World," proceeds on the assumption that there exists an analogy between the several stages of the life of individuals, and the great epochs through which our race has passed and is passing. The substance of his view may be presented in these his words: "We may rightly speak of a childhood, a youth, and a manhood of the world. The men of the earliest ages were in many respects still children, as compared with ourselves. with all the blessings and with all the advantages that belong to childhood. We reap the fruits of their toil, and bear in our characters the impress of their cultivation. Our characters have grown out of their history, as the character of the man grows out of the history of the child. There are matters in which the simplicity of childhood is wiser than the maturity of manhood ; and in these they were wiser than we. There are matters in which the child is nothing, and the man is everything ; and in these we are the gainers. And the

process by which we have either lost or gained, corresponds stage by stage, with the process by which the infant is trained for youth, and the youth for manhood."

This training has three stages. In children we are subject to positive rules, which we cannot understand, but are bound implicitly to obey. In youth we are subject to the influence of example; and soon break loose from all rules, unless illustrated and enforced by the higher teaching which example imparts. In manhood we are comparatively free from external restraints; and if we are to learn must be our own instructors. First come rules, then examples, then principles. First comes the Law, then the Son of Man, then the Gift of the Spirit. The world was once a child, under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the Father. Then, when the fit season had arrived, the example to which all ages should turn, was sent to teach men what they ought to be. Then the human race was left to itself, to be guided by the teaching of the Spirit within.

To the Law and the Prophets the world is indebted for the unity and spirituality of God. The unity of God out-tops all other ideas in dignity and worth. The spirituality of God involves in it the supremacy of conscience, the immortality of the soul, the final judgment of the human race. If God is one and spiritual, then the spiritual power within us, which proclaims its own unity and independence of matter by the universality of its decrees, must be the rightful monarch of our lives.

The Hebrews disciplined the human conscience; Rome, the human will; Greece, the reason and taste; Asia, the spiritual imagination; so Athanasius, a thorough Asiatic in sentiment and in mode of arguing, was the bulwark of the doctrine of the trinity.

The childhood of the world was over when our Lord appeared on earth. The tutors and governors had done their work. It was time that the second teacher of the human race should begin his labour. The second teacher is example. The one example of all examples came in the fulness of time,—for which all history had been preparing, to which all history since has been looking back. Hence the first and largest place in the New Testament is assigned to his life, four times told. This life we emphatically call the Gospel. If there is little herein to be technically called doctrine, yet,

here is the fountain of all inspiration. There is no Christian who would not rather part with all the rest of the Bible, than with these four books. There is no part of God's word which the religious man more instinctively remembers. The sermon on the mount, the parables and the miracles, the last supper, the Mount of Olives, the garden of Gethsemane, the cross on Calvary—these are the companions alike of infancy and of old age; simple enough to be read with awe and wonder by the one; profound enough to open new depths of wisdom to the fullest experience of the other.

Our Lord was the example of mankind; and there can be no example in the same sense. But the whole period from the closing of the Old Testament to the close of the New was the period of the world's youth; and our Lord's presence was not the only influence of that kind which has acted upon the human race. Three companions were appointed by Providence to give their society to this creature whom God was educating—Greece, Rome, and the early Church. To these three mankind has ever since looked back, and will ever hereafter look back with the same affection, the same lingering regret, with which age looks back to early manhood. In these three mankind remembers the brilliant social companion, whose wish and fancy sharpened the intellect and refined the imagination; the bold and clever leader with whom to dare was to do, and whose very name was a signal of success; and the earnest, heavenly-minded friend whose saintly aspect was a revelation in itself.

The early Church stands as the example which has most influenced our religious life, as Greece and Rome have most influenced our political and intellectual life. We read the New Testament not to find there forms of devotion, for there are few to be found; nor laws of Church government, for there are hardly any; nor creeds, for there are none; nor doctrines logically stated, for there is no attempt at logical precision. The New Testament is almost entirely occupied with two lives, the life of our Lord and the life of the early Church.

When Christians needed creeds and liturgies, and forms of Church government, and systems of theology, they could not find them in the New Testament; they found there only the materials out of which such needs could be supplied; but the combination and selection of those materials they had to pro-

vide for themselves. The example of the early Church will live and teach for ever. In her we learn what is meant by zeal, what by love of God, what by joy in the Holy Ghost, what by endurance for the sake of Christ. There have been great saints since the days of the apostles; holiness is as possible now as it was then, but the saintliness of that time had a peculiar beauty which we cannot copy, in the perfect simplicity of the religious life, the singleness of heart, the openness the childlike earnestness.

Since the days of the apostles no further revelation has been granted. The claim of infallibility, still maintained by a portion of Christendom, has been entirely given up by the more advanced section. The Church, in the fullest sense, is left to herself to work out, by her natural faculties, the principles of her own action; and whatever assistance she is to receive in doing so, is to be through those natural faculties, and not in spite of them, or without them. From an early day she undertook a career of dogmatism, which in many ways was similar to the hasty generalisations of early manhood. A vast number of her early divisions are practically obsolete, and even many of her doctrinal statements are plainly unfitted for permanent use. Under the influence of the spirit of God, men are beginning to take a wider view than they did. Physical science, researches into history, a more thorough knowledge of the world have enlarged our philosophy beyond the limits which bounded that of the Church of the Fathers; and all these have an influence whether we will or no, on our determinations of religious truth. There are found to be more things in heaven and earth than were dreamed of in the patristic theology. God's creation is a new book, to be read by the side of his revelation, and to be interpreted as coming from him. We can acknowledge the great value of the forms in which the first ages of the Church defined the truth, and yet refuse to be bound by them: we can use them, and yet endeavour to go beyond them, just as they also went beyond the legacy which was left us by the apostles.

In learning this new lesson, Christendom has needed a firm spot on which she might stand, and has found it in the Bible. Had the Bible been drawn up in precise statements of faith or detailed precepts of conduct, we should have had no alternative but either permanent subjection to another law, or loss of the highest instrument of education. But the Bible

from its very form is exactly adapted to our present wants. It is a history; even the doctrinal parts of it are cast in an historical form, and are best studied by considering them as records of the time at which they were written, and as conveying to us the highest and the greatest religious life of that time. Hence we use the Bible,—some consciously, some unconsciously—not to override but to evoke the voice of conscience. When conscience and the Bible appear to differ, the pious Christian immediately concludes that he has not understood the Bible. Hence too while the interpretation of the Bible varies slightly from age to age it varies always in one direction. The schoolmen found purgatory in it. Later students found enough to condemn Galileo. Not long ago it would have been held to condemn geology; and there are still many who so interpret it. The current is all one way: it evidently points to the identification of the Bible with the voice of conscience. The Bible, in fact, is hindered by its form from exercising a despotism over the human spirit; if it could do that, it would become an outer law at once; but its form is so admirably adapted to our need, that it wins from us all the reverence of a supreme authority, and yet imposes upon us no yoke of subjection. This it does by virtue of the principle of private judgment, which puts conscience between us and the bible; making conscience the supreme interpreter, whom it may be a duty to enlighten, but whom it can never be a duty to disobey. How utterly impossible it would be in the manhood of the world to imagine any other instructor of mankind? And for that reason every day makes it more and more evident that the thorough study of the Bible, the investigation of what it teaches and what it does not teach, the determination of the limits of what we mean by its inspiration, the determination of the degree of authority to be ascribed to the different books (if any degrees are to be admitted), must take the lead of all other studies. He is guilty of high treason against the faith who fears the result of any investigation, whether philosophical, or scientific, or historical. And therefore nothing should be more welcome than the extension of knowledge of any and every kind; for every increase in our accumulations of knowledge throws fresh light upon these, the real problems of our day. If geology proves to us that we must not interpret the first chapters of Genesis literally; if historical investigation shall

show us that inspiration, however it may protect the doctrine, yet was not empowered to protect the narrative of the inspired writers from occasional inaccuracy; if careful criticism shall prove that there have been occasionally interpolations and forgeries in that book, as in many others,—the results should still be welcome. Even the mistakes of careful and reverent students are more valuable now than the truth held in unthinking acquiescence. The substance of the teaching which we derive from the Bible will not really be affected by anything of the sort; while its hold upon the mind of believers, and its power to stir the depths of the spirit of man, however much weakened at first, must be immeasurably strengthened in the end by clearing away any blunders which may have been fastened on it by human interpretation. The immediate work of the day is the study of the Bible. If we have made mistakes careful study may teach us better. Life indeed is higher than all else; and no service that man can render to his fellows is to be compared with the heavenly power of a life of holiness. But next to that must be ranked whatever tends to make man think clearly and judge correctly. Thought is now higher than action, unless action be inspired with the very breath of heaven: for we are now men governed by principles, if governed at all; and cannot rely any longer on the impulses of youth or the discipline of childhood.

According to Dr. Temple the course of human life, whether individual or general, is an educational course. The idea, borrowed from Lessing, stands in broad contrast with the theological view of man's career, and is destined to supersede it. The essence of the latter is a fall from what is termed "original righteousness." That fall entailed original sin. Original sin vitiates the race. A vitiated race requires an outward redemption. Hence the atonement which is an infinite sacrifice for an infinite sin, committed by man as sinning against the infinite God. Thus the educational view by excluding the theological, excludes the figment of original sin and all its fancied consequences.

In Dr. Rowland Williams's account of the late Baron Bunsen's Biblical researches the writer reports the opinions of another rather than states his own. The authority of that other, namely Bunsen, is very great with all who having made

a careful study of his works, are competent to form a sound and discriminating judgment. A more encyclopedic mind than Bunsen's probably never existed. Nor was there ever a more enlightened conscience, a more honest heart, and in simple manly piety, he is surpassed by very few. The only drawback is a certain mysticism not unusual in the German mind. That drawback is lessened when Bunsen's doctrines are interpreted by Rowland Williams. For indeed the latter is not ashamed to sit at the feet of the former. Accordingly when the master's massive German learning is expounded by the British sound sense and clear judgment of the scholar, there ensues a result which deserves attention from all, and will command respect from those with whom the love of truth is paramount.

The great principles developed, the important discoveries made, and the valuable truths taught by Bunsen, as set forth by Williams, can here receive only a passing notice. History combines with geology in considerably throwing back the age of the world as gathered from the Bible. The exact prolongation is scarcely determined. There is no danger in prefixing some millenium to our ordinary chronology. God's providence, favourable as it was to the Hebrew people, embraced other nations of the earth, all the inhabitants of which are dear in his sight inasmuch as they are his children. As to different branches of this great family different aptitudes and correspondingly different tasks were assigned, so to the faithful Abraham and his descendants was given the highest of all privileges, namely, the power and the office of religionising the world. Accordingly Abraham is at once the progenitor of Moses, Mahomed, and Christ, in and by whom, as is now patent to every one, all the families of the earth are destined to be blessed. The blessing has been coming to man with constant increase from the earliest ages, first in divine influences preparing for Abraham, whose religion is summed up in deep and practical trust in the one God, the maker of all things; then in the Mosaic institutions, including the noble race of prophets—the moral and political because truly religious teachers and reformers of their several ages; then in the ministry of Christ; and finally in the ministry of the Spirit of God working in the Christian Church, by working in the heart of every one of its faithful members.

These general views are wrought out in the midst of

details which extend over the whole texture of Scripture and the whole domain of theology, not to say religion. Whatever is touched receives light. But I have not space for particular instances, and must pass from scholarship to divinity.

Proceeding on the right and the Scriptural basis of recognising Jesus as the moral and spiritual Saviour of mankind—a recognition which was in the heart perhaps even more than in the head, and which in making him one in affection, aim, and spirit with Christ gave him the best of all titles to the name of Christian; Bunsen interpreted many of the doctrines and facts of the Gospel with a true Christian sentiment, and so has brought into permanent relief many truths no less precious than scriptural. Thus justification by faith means acceptance with God, and the consequence peace of mind which ensues on simple and loving trust in God, as the Father of Jesus,—a valuable exchange surely for the orthodox fiction of merit by transfer. Propitiation too is the tranquilising of the waves of human passion by virtue of the power of God in Christ, rather than the appeasement of the vindictive wrath of the Almighty. The fires of hell are images of the fires of conscience. Heaven is the enjoyment of the love of God. The kingdom of God is no more Romish sacerdotalism than Jewish royalty, but the realization of God's will in man's heart. More speculative and elaborate, and also less true are Bunsen's views on the relations borne by God and Christ one to another. Yet even here there is at least a wide departure from scholastic and once popular errors. On this point I transcribe Dr. Williams's own words. "The expression of spirit in deed and form is generically akin to creation, and illustrates the incarnation; for though the true substance of Deity took body in the Son of Man, they who know the divine substance to be spirit will conceive of such embodiment of the Eternal Mind very differently from those who abstract all divine attributes,—such as consciousness, forethought, and love,—and then imagine a material residuum, on which they confer the holiest name. The divine attributes are co-essential with the divine essence. He who abides in love abides in God and God in him. Thus the incarnation becomes with our author as purely spiritual as it was with Paul. The son of David by birth is the son of God by the spirit of holiness. What is born of flesh is flesh, and what is born of spirit is spirit."

These verities became materialised in the unspiritual hands of Fathers and Churchmen. "Salvation from evil though sharing a Saviour's spirit was shifted into a notion of purchase from God through the price of his bodily pangs. The deep drama of heart and mind became externalised into a commercial transfer, and this effected by a form of ritual. So with the more speculative fathers, the doctrine of the trinity was a profound metaphysical problem, wedded to what seemed consequences of the incarnation; but in ruder hands, it became a materialism almost idolatrous, or an arithmetical enigma. Even now different accepters of the same doctrinal terms hold many shades of conception between a philosophical view which recommends itself as easiest to believe, and one felt to be so irrational that it calls in the aid of terror. The historian, (Bunsen), of such variations was not likely, with those whose theology consists of invidious terms, to escape the nickname of Pelagian or Sabellian. He evidently could not state original sin in so exaggerated a form as to make the design of God altered by the first agents in his creation, or to destroy the notion of moral choice and the foundation of ethics; nor could his trinity destroy by inference that divine unity which all acknowledge in terms. The fall of Adam represents with him ideally the circumscription of our spirits in limits of flesh and time, and practically the selfish nature with which we fall from the likeness of God, which should be fulfilled in man. So his doctrine of the trinity ingenuously avoids building on texts which our Unitarian critics from Sir Isaac Newton to Gilbert Wakefield, have impugned; but is a philosophical rendering of the first chapter of St. John's Gospel. The profoundest analysis of our world leaves the law of thought as its ultimate basis and law of co-hereence. This thought is consubstantial with the being of the Eternal I AM. Being, becoming and animating; or substance, thinking and conscious life, are expressions of a triad which may be also represented as will, wisdom, and love; as light, radiance, and warmth; as fountain, stream, and united flow; as mind, thought, and consciousness; as person, word, and life; as Father, Son, and Spirit. In virtue of such identity of thought with Being, the primitive trinity represented neither their originant principles, nor their transient phases, but their eternal inherencies in one Divine Mind. "The unity of God (to quote Bunsen's own words) as the Eternal Father, is the

fundamental doctrine of Christianity";* but (continues Dr. Williams) the Divine Consciousness or Wisdom, consubstantial with the Eternal Will, becoming personal in the Son of Man, is the express image of the Father; and Jesus, actually, but also mankind ideally, is the Son of God. If all this has a Sabellian sound, its impugnors are bound, even on patristic grounds, to show how it differs from the doctrine of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, and the historian Eusebius. If the language of those very Fathers who wrote against different forms of Sabellianism, would if now first used, be condemned as Sabellian, are we to follow the ancient, or modern guides? May not a straining after orthodoxy, with all the confusion incident to metaphysical terms, have led the scholars beyond their masters? We have some authorities, who, if Athanasius himself were quoted anonymously, would neither recognize the author nor approve his doctrine. They would judge him by the creed bearing his name, the sentiments of which are difficult to reconcile with his genuine works, as its Latin terms are with his Greek language. Baron Bunsen may admire that creed as little as Jeremy Taylor† and Tillotson‡ did, without necessarily contradicting the great Father to whom it is ascribed. Still more; as a philosopher, sitting loose to our Articles, he may deliberately assign to the conclusions of councils a very subordinate value; and taking his stand on the genuine words of Holy Scripture, and the immutable laws of God in the human mind, he may say, either the doctrine of the trinity agrees with these tests, or, if you make it disagree, you make it false. If he (Bunsen) errs in his speculation, he gives us in his critical researches the surest means of correcting his errors; and his polemic is at least triumphant against those who load the Church with the conclusions of patristic thought, and forbid our thinking sufficiently to understand them. As the coolest heads at Trent said, "Take care, lest in condemning Luther you condemn Augustin": so if our defenders of the faith would have men believe the doctrine of the trinity, they had better not forbid metaphysics, or even sneer at Realism."

I conclude this imperfect outline of Williams's masterly report of Bunsen's researches with the following: "Bunsen's

*Hippolytus, vol. 2, p. 46, first edition.

†Liberty of Prophesying, p.p. 491, 2, vol vii.; Ed., Heber.

‡Burnet's Own Times; Letter from Tillotson at the end.

enduring glory is, neither to have faltered with his conscience, nor shrunk from the difficulties of the problem, but to have brought a vast erudition, in the light of a Christian conscience, to unroll tangled records; tracing frankly the Spirit of God elsewhere, but honouring chiefly the traditions of his Hebrew sanctuary."

If we are to retain the old anglican foundations of research and fair statement, we must revise some of the decisions provisionally given upon imperfect evidence; or, if we shrink from doing so, we must abdicate our ancient claims to build upon the truth; and our retreat will be either to Rome, as some of our lost ones have consistently seen; or to some form, equally evil, of darkness voluntary. The attitude of too many English scholars before the lost monster of the deep, is that of the senators before Tiberius. They stand balancing terror against mutual shame. Even with those in our universities, who no longer repeat fully the required shibboleths, the explicitness of truth is rare. He who asserts most, committing himself least to baseness, is reckoned wisest."

The late Professor Baden Powell's "On the Study of the Evidences of Christianity" is rather a general critique on the views put forth on the subject of miracles generally and the miracles recorded in the New Testament in particular, than a systematic treatise expounding principles and deducing truths connected with the subject. Accordingly it is not an attack on, or a defence of the miracles of the Bible, though the tendency of the remarks is of an adverse character. This tendency seems to have arisen from the habits of a mind formed all but exclusively in geometrical processes, and which accordingly is led if not to deify physical nature, at least to make what are called its laws supreme, and to throw open a wide gulph between the physical world and its creator and all-pervading presence, God. Of course, if God is shut out from his own universe, or if God is involved in an iron net-work of independent and changeless law, then the action of God being in either case restricted, miracle in any proper sense of the term is impossible. Not so, but the reverse, if, as is really the truth, God is essentially free, and if God in perfect freedom lives, moves, and acts throughout the great *cosmos*, the existence and phenomena of which are simply the movements of his will and the manifesta-

tion of his attributes. However, let Mr. Baden Powell be right or wrong, the volume is not pledged to his views, if only because Dr. Temple expressly admits the miracles of Christ as among the facts of the Gospel.

In the fourth essay of the volume the Rev. Henry Bristow Wilson, author of "Schemes of Christian Comprehension" which formed part of the Oxford Essays (1857), argues on behalf of the principle of an Established Church, and maintains a free if not a latitudinarian interpretation of the Articles of the Anglican Establishment. Two principles, that of individualism, and that of multitudinism, present themselves as the social condition of a Christian community. The latter embracing whole nations, form national churches, and lend to individuals the united sympathy and aid of numbers, in their efforts to work out the religious life. The former places the individual himself in direct contact and communion with his Maker. The former is the object of Mr. Wilson's preference. In the very terms of the latter, I find grounds for making it my own; and that the rather, because while the former is utterly futile, except so far as it secures and intensifies the agency of the latter, the latter avoiding the evils incident to the former, recognises the essential element of all true religion, gives it full scope, and educes from man's native powers, aided by their Divine Author, all the good they are capable of producing. Were I however a churchman, I should feel that Mr. Wilson had rendered a service to the Establishment; and even as I am I rejoice in the claim he puts forward for a liberal interpretation of its formularies, and the words he utters on behalf of a catholic spirit. This is the way in which the grounds of union present themselves to his view.

"The Protestant feeling among us has satisfied itself in a blind way with the anti-Roman declaration, that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith," etc., and without reflecting how very much is wisely left open in that article. For this declaration itself is partly negative and partly positive; as to its negative part it declares that nothing—no clause of creed, no decision of council, no tradition or exposition—is to be required to be

believed on peril of salvation, unless it be Scriptural; but it does not lay down that everything which is contained in Scripture must be believed in on the same peril. Or it may be expressed thus:—The word of God is contained in Scripture, whence it does not follow that it is co-extensive with it. The Church to which we belong does not put that stumbling block before the feet of her members; it is their own fault if they place it there for themselves, authors of their own offence. Under the terms of the Sixth Article, one may accept literally, or allegorically, or as parable, or poetry, or legend, the story of a serpent tempter, of an ass speaking with man's voice, of an arresting of the earth's motion, of a reversal of it motion, of waters standing in a solid heap, of witches and a variety of apparitions. So, under the terms of the Sixth Article, every one is free in judgment as to the primeval institution of the Sabbath, the universality of the Deluge, the confusion of tongues, the corporeal taking up of Elijah into heaven, the nature of angels, the reality of demoniacal possession, the personality of Satan, and the miraculous particulars of many events. So the dates and authorship of the several books received as canonical are not determined by any authority, nor their relative value and importance."

Many may take a view different from that of our author; but they have no right to deny to others the liberty they use themselves.

"To lay down as an alternative for striving for more liberty of thought and expression within the Church of the nation, that those that are dissatisfied may sever themselves and join a sect, would be paralleled by declaring to political reformers that they are welcome to expatriate themselves if they desire any change in the existing forms of the Constitution. The suggestion of the alternative is an insult; if it could be enforced, it would be a grievous wrong."

"Jesus Christ has not revealed His religion as a theology of the intellect, nor as an historical faith; and it is a stifling of the true Christian life, both in the individual and the Church, to require of many men a unanimity in speculative doctrine, which is unattainable, and a uniformity of historical belief, which can never exist."

"On the Mosaic Cosmogony" is the title of the fifth essay by C. W. Goodwin, M.A., the only layman of the seven. The

piece supplies a sufficient refutation of the opinion of those who hold that the narratives of the creation, taken in their only proper sense, namely the sense of the writer or writers, are in harmony with the teachings of modern Geology.

The Rev. Mark Pattison, B.D. furnishes in the sixth essay some account of the "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, from 1688—1750." The essay is mainly historical. Contributing to the value of the volume, it supplies little to alarm a suspicious orthodoxy. Yet here too are found truths whose utterance is too free to be forgiven. Mr. Pattison argues that the outwardness of religious thought, particularly in its application to what are called "the evidences of religion," tended to make men sceptical rather than believing, and is specially detrimental when trying to embody the essence of religion in creeds, confessions, and rituals, it made their acceptance the one condition of salvation.

"The defect of the eighteenth century theology was not in having too much good sense, but in having nothing besides. In the present day, when a godless orthodoxy threatens, as in the fifteenth century, to extinguish religious thought altogether, and nothing is allowed in the Church of England but the formulæ of past thinkings, which have long lost all sense of any kind; it may seem out of season to be bringing forward a misapplication of common sense in a bygone age. There are times and circumstances when religious ideas will be greatly benefitted by being submitted to the rough and ready tests by which busy men try what comes in their way; by being made to stand their trial and be freely canvassed *coram populo*. As poetry is not for the critics, so religion is not for the theologians. When it is stiffened into phrases, and these phrases are declared to be objects of reverence but not of intelligence, it is on the way to become a useless incumbrance, the rubbish of the past, blocking the road. Theology then retires into the position it occupies in the Church of Rome at present, an unmeaning frost-work of dogma, out of all relation to the actual history of man."

The gem of the book is professor Jowett's treatise "On the Interpretation of Scripture." The great principle which

underlies the whole is of the utmost simplicity. It is this, that the way to interpret any writing, and so the way to interpret the writings of the Bible, is to ascertain what in each word, clause, sentence, paragraph, and chapter your author meant or intended to say. Get and state the thought of Paul, Peter, or James, and you perform the primary duty of Scriptural exposition. Having once obtained their thought, that is their state of mind, you will then consider what, in the present state of the world, and in your own particular condition, that thought or meaning says to you in the way of instruction or obligation. These principles are applied by the learned essayist with a multiplicity of illustration and a point and force of evidence, which can hardly fail to weigh with opponents, and which carry the impartial and teachable along in willing and grateful accord.

It is impossible on this occasion to give an analysis of this wonderfully instructive and eloquent piece of writing. The most meagre account of it would occupy many pages. I must content myself with two or three extracts. Distinguishing between the Scripture itself and men's opinions or interpretations of Scripture, the author makes these remarks "The book itself remains, as at the first, unchanged amid the changing interpretations of it. The office of the interpreter is not to add another but to recover the original one—the meaning, that is, of the words as they first struck on the ears or flashed before the eyes of those who heard and read them. He has to transfer himself to another age; to imagine that he is a disciple of Christ or Paul; to disengage himself from all that follows. The history of Christendom is nothing to him;—but only the scene at Galilee or Jerusalem, the handful of believers who gathered themselves together at Ephesus, or Corinth, or Rome. His eye is fixed on the form of one like the Son of Man, or of the prophet who was girded with a garment of camel's hair, or of the apostle who had a thorn in the flesh. The greatness of the Roman empire is nothing to him: it is an inner, not an outer world that he is striving to restore. All the after-thoughts of theology are nothing to him; they are not the true lights which give light in difficult places. His concern is with a book, in which, as in other ancient writings, are some things of which we are ignorant; which defect of our knowledge cannot however be supplied by the conjectures of Fathers or Divines. The simple words of that book

he tries to preserve absolutely pure from the refinements or distinctions of later times. He acknowledges that they are fragmentary; and would suspect himself if out of fragments he were able to create a well-rounded system or a continuous history. The greater part of his learning is a knowledge of the text itself: he has no delight in the voluminous literature which has overgrown it. He has no theory of interpretation; a few rules guarding against common errors are enough for him. His object is to read Scripture like any other book, with a real interest, and not merely a conventional one. He wants to be able to open his eyes, and to see or imagine things as they truly are."

One source of error is, that separate passages "are interpreted with a reference to the traditions of existing communions. The natural meaning of particular expressions is set aside in favour of others, which, however improbable, are more in accordance with pre-conceived opinions, or seem to be more worthy of the sacred writers. The language, and also the text are treated on the same defensive and conservative principles. The received translation of Phil. iii. 6, ("who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God"); or of Rom. iii. 25 ("whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood"); or Rom. xv. 6 ("God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ") though erroneous, are not given up without a struggle; the passages 1 Tim. iii. 16, and 1 John v. 7 ("the three witnesses") though the first ("God manifest in the flesh") is not found in the best manuscripts, and the second in no Greek manuscript worth speaking of, have not yet disappeared from the editions of the Greek Testament commonly used in England, and still less from the English translation. An English commentator, who with Lachmann and Tischendorf, supported also by the authority of Erasmus, ventures to alter the punctuation of the doxology in Rom. ix. 5 ('who is over all God blessed for ever,') hardly escapes the charge of heresy. That in most of these cases, the words referred to have a direct bearing on important controversies, is a reason not for retaining but for correcting them."

"The neglect of another class of passages is even more surprising: the precepts contained in them being quite practical, and in harmony with the existing state of the world. In this instance it seems as if religious teachers had failed to gather those principles of which they stood most in need.

‘Think ye that those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell?’ is the characteristic lesson of the Gospel on the occasion of any sudden visitation. Yet it is another reading of such calamities that is commonly insisted upon. The observation is seldom made respecting the parable of the good Samaritan that the true neighbour is also a person of a different religion. The words, ‘Forbid him not, for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can speak evil of me,’ are often said to have no application to sectarian differences in the present day, when the Church is established and miracles have ceased. The conduct of our Lord to the woman taken in adultery, though not intended for our imitation always, yet affords a painful contrast to the excessive severity with which even a Christian society punishes the errors of woman. The boldness with which St. Paul applies the principle of individual judgment, ‘Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind;’ as exhibited also in the words ‘Let no man judge you in respect of the new moon or of the Sabbath days,’ is far greater than would be allowed in the present age. That the tenet of the damnation of the heathen should ever have prevailed in the Christian world, or that the damnation of Catholics should have been a received opinion among Protestants, implies a strange forgetfulness of such passages as Rom. ii. 1—16, ‘Who rewardeth every one according to his works’; and ‘When the Gentiles, which know not the law do by nature the things contained in the law,’ &c. What a difference between the simple statement which the Apostle makes of the justice of God, and the ‘uncovenanted mercies,’ or ‘invincible ignorance’ of theologians, half reluctant to give up, yet afraid to maintain, the advantage of denying salvation to those who are *extra palam ecclesæ*. The same habit of silence or misinterpretation extends to words or statements of Scripture, in which doctrines are thought to be interested. When maintaining the Athanasian doctrines of the trinity we do not readily recall the verse ‘Of that hour knoweth no one; no, not the angels of God; *neither the Son*, but the Father.’ The temper of feeling which led Saint Ambrose to doubt the genuineness of the words marked in Italics, leads Christians in our own days to pass them over. The Calvinist ignores almost the whole of the sacred volume for the sake of a few verses. The truth is that in seeking to prove our own opinions out of Scripture we are constantly falling into the com-

mon fallacy of opening our eyes to one class of facts and closing them to another. The favourite verses shine like stars, while the rest of the page is thrown into the shade."

The reader has before him an imperfect sketch of what is taught by the "Essays and Reviews." To that teaching, in the main, I subscribe. The principles on which it is grounded, the method by which it set forth, and the substance of which it consists, I have for years taught, alike from the pulpit and the press and the tutor's chair. With the modifications I have made as I proceeded, I entirely and cordially own and avouch, the tenor of this volume. Representing my thought correctly in the general, it does not represent it fully. With Dr. Temple, I acknowledge Christ as my example, but I also love, revere, and serve him as my Saviour. To me Christ is emphatically the moral and spiritual Saviour of mankind. Equally "the power and the wisdom of God," Christ is "able to save to the uttermost" all who come to God through him, in the faith of a loving and trusting heart. Of course, such an acknowledgement can hold no secondary place. It is the sun of my Christianity, as it is the central heat and light of the Gospel. Nor is the sublime and endearing idea more necessary for a holy Christian life than for a free, reasonable, and consistent theology. "God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," is the one word which solves all problems, whether speculative, moral, spiritual, or social. And it is mainly because the volume under notice conduces to the reception of that thought in its simple scriptural purity and genuine power—it is mainly on that account that I give it a hearty welcome and wish it God speed.

No where however, do I find my own thoughts so exactly or so fully reflected as in the essay by the professor of Greek in the University of Oxford. To almost every sentence of that admirable composition could I subscribe. One passage carries me back to my college days, when my theological tutor, a man who in most essential respects stood in advance of his age, taught as the sum of his doctrines on the interpretation of Scripture, that which Mr. Jowett gives as the sum of his own instructions:—"That Scripture, like other books, has one meaning, which is to be gathered from itself without reference to the adaptations of Fathers or Divines: and without regard

to *à priori* notions about its nature and origin. It is to be interpreted like other books, with attention to the character of its authors, and the prevailing state of civilisation and knowledge, with allowance for peculiarities of style and language, and modes of thought and figures of speech. Yet not without a sense that as we read there grows upon us the witness of God in the world, anticipating in a rude and primitive age the truth that was to be, shining more and more unto the perfect day in the life of Christ, which again is reflected from different points of view in the teaching of his apostles."

Nor am I alone in my cordial sympathy. I am indeed not aware that Unitarians have circulated passages of the volume (as they have been rudely accused of doing), though if they can obtain the requisite permission I hope they will do so, and that without delay. But I know that a Unitarian publisher of Boston in the United States, has issued two editions of the work. I will add, that I should rejoice to see a cheap edition for the people put forth in England immediately. These statements may gratify the assailants of the volume. They will be glad probably to be able to point to my words and say triumphantly, "See, you are so heretical as to be approved by Unitarians." I think however that the authors of the book have fortitude enough to bear the reproach calmly. I at least know the extent of the power for harm which reviling possesses, and am indifferent to all it can do.

If the book is of God, it will make its way and do its work in spite of detraction; if it is not, let it perish, and the sooner the better. Equally indifferent am I to the charge preferred in Convocation against Unitarians of being "the direct natural enemies of the Church of Christ," for I am hardened against this sort of thing by some experience, nor wholly unprepared by Him, who, speaking of the priests of Judea, said to his disciples, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord; it is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord; if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call so them of his household: fear them not therefore; for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops." (Matt. x., 24, seq.)

A great national instructor who smiles while he teaches, and plays while he reproveth, has given this wise piece of advice.

"Some heresies are so engrained,
E'en burning wont remove them,
A shorter and an easier way
You'll find it—to disprove them.

"Be this, Right Reverends, your revenge,
For souls, the best of cure,
Essay essayists to upset,
And to review reviewers."

I have called this council wise, and yet I am not sure that it would be easier to refute than to burn the "Essays and Reviews." Certain however it is that neither to burn a book nor to cry it down is a very logical way of dealing with it. Nor is either a method which accords with the fundamental principles of Protestantism, though the same cannot be said of the practice of the Protestant Church of England in some periods of its history. Rarely indeed do men bring on themselves the disgrace and odium of hooting or destroying what they are able to confute. To put a book into the pillory is, at least in these days, to throw around it the halo of martyrdom, and make it as a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid. The more therefore, men hate a book, the less, were they prudent, they would say about it. But "the moderation of the Church of England" has definable limits. How indeed could it be endured that doctrines which do not so much assail High Church or Low Church, as aim a blow at what is common to all forms of the popular churches, whether established or non-conformist, should be put forth without let or hindrance? Where all are in danger, all must combine. Let those who can, write "Essays and Reviews" in periodicals; from a giant or two, a volume or two may in due time be expected; but all are able to shout, and therefore let all shout their loudest, that, if possible, the book may be put down by a load of denunciations. In consequence, the clerical body is moved from north to south and from east to west; from the archbishop that sitteth on the throne, to the hard-working curate that pines in a cottage. With one voice thousands de-

clare and proclaim that the book is dangerous and heretical, if not atheistic.

If we are to take the word of the Bishop of Durham, "the hearts of honest and faithful churchmen *should burn with indignation*" at the book; "a more heterodox volume could scarcely have been produced. The atonement is denied; miracles are explained away; prophecy is cast aside; inspiration, in the only real meaning of the term, is rejected. Men of all shades of opinion are convinced of the presence in the person of those seven essayists of *a common foe to Christian truth*;" and the bishop thinks it a duty to "show our abhorrence of opinions which I, from my heart, consider to be not only *detrimental to the best interests of morality* and derogatory to the word of God, but manifestly opposed to the truth, as it is in Jesus." Accordingly there is in the sacerdotal order a strong desire to go beyond words. "What is to be done?" is the general inquiry in the established Church. "What can be done?" "Something must be done." All are ready for action. Strip Professor Jowett of his professorial gown. Drive Dr. Temple from his mastership at Rugby. Expel Dr. Williams from his vice-principal chair. Unfrock every priest among them; and close the door to advancement against the layman. Try them all for heresy. Is imprisonment impossible? Cannot the island be made too hot to hold them? Any way make them recant; "nothing," says the Bishop of Oxford, "but an entire recantation can satisfy the Church." The storm, though neither pleasant nor becoming, is witnessed by the country with interest indeed, but without alarm. These terrible threats expend themselves in the anathemas of a convocation of the clergy which has long been powerless and is now becoming absurd. Doubtless there is in the clerical mind the will to inflict coercive penalties. But the civil power guards our right of free speech, and so all this sacerdotal heat is evaporating innocuously. Should any attempt be made to transmute this passionate zeal into persecuting deeds, the queen, as the representative of our British liberties, would appear in the upper house of convocation, with the dignity and the power which befits the monarch of a free people, and act the part ascribed by Virgil to Neptune, in curbing the self-willed fury of the winds, his unruly subjects.

Disiectam Aenae toto videt aequore classem;
Fluctibus oppressos Troas coelique ruina.

Nec latuere doli fratrem Junonis et irae.
 Eurum ad se Zephyrumque vocat ; dehinc talia fatur :
 Tantaene vos generis tenuit fiducia vestri ?
 Jam coelum terramque meo sine numine, Venti,
 Misceri, et tantas audetis tollere moles ?
 Quos ego—Sed motos praestat componere fluctus.
 Post mihi non simili poena commissa luetis.
 Maturate fugam, regique hæcu dicite vestro :
 Non illi imperium pelagi saevumque tridentem,
 Sed mihi sorte datum,*

Had it been their purpose to illustrate the impotency of their Church in matters of self-government and doctrinal discipline, the clergy would not have taken measures more effectual than those which they have taken. Rome, even in her present hour of decay, retains the power of authoritatively branding an obnoxious volume, and of keeping it out of the hands of at least the great bulk of its subjects, by giving it a place in its notorious Index. Indeed, it has lately taken this step in regard to a volume similar in aim and tendency to "Essays and Reviews," written by Dr. Reville, productions from whose learned and eloquent pen the reader will have the opportunity of perusing. What, however, the Church of England wants in power she tries to make up in the way of misrepresentation. Of this resource the Rev. Cannon Stowell has made copious use. In a passage of a speech delivered before the Church Missionary Society, which is an appeal to passion more than to argument, he gives the impression that

*The passage is translated by Dryden thus:—

He saw the Trojan fleet dispers'd, distress'd,
 By stormy winds and wintry heaven oppress'd.
 Full well the God his sister's envy knew,
 And what her aims and what her arts pursue :
 He summon'd Eurus and the western blast,
 And first an angry look on both he cast :
 Then thus rebuk'd ; Audacious winds ! from whence
 This bold attempt, this rebel insolence ?
 Is it for you to ravage sea and land,
 Unauthoris'd by my supreme command ?
 To raise such mountains on the troubled main ?
 Whom I—but first tis fit the billows to restrain :
 And then you shall be taught obedience to my reign.
 Hence to your lord my royal mandate bear,
 The realms of ocean and the fields of air
 Are mine, not his ; by fatal lot to me
 The liquid empire fell and trident of the sea.

the authors of the "Essays and Reviews" are striving to rob the sick and the dying of the light, solace, and support of the Bible. On what ground is this imputation made? The only possible ground is found in the fact that they take one view of certain theological doctrines and the accuser takes another. To them the Bible is as dear and venerable as it is to him. He indeed charges them with taking from the Bible, but then he cannot in the face of the scholarship of the world, deny or at least disprove, that he and his associates add to the Bible. So long as the convicted forgery of "The Three Heavenly Witnesses" is allowed to remain part of the Bible, and so long as Canon Stowell joins others to send that forgery over the world as a part of "God's Word," he is not in a condition to reprove men for disrespect to the Bible. Why, who shows the greater respect to a book, he who circulates it while containing acknowledged additions and errors, or he who endeavours to make the book exactly the same as it was when it proceeded from the hands of its author? and who shows the greater respect to the author of a book, he who interprets it in the sense of imperfectly informed ages, ages when papal despotism took the Bible out of the hands of the people and made it all but inaccessible even to their spiritual guides,—ages when gross darkness in religion covered all Europe, yet the very ages when orthodoxy was born, bred, and brought to maturity; or he who interprets the Bible with the aid of all the light of the present day, light which includes everything that is solid and useful in the experience of seventeen centuries, and who interprets the Bible with this aid so as not to put on the Bible his own opinion or the dogmas of any church, but simply to learn what the Bible is, as handed down to him by Divine Providence, and what God in his own Bible says to him and to his fellow-men? Surely the Bible can and does tell its own tale. Surely that tale is simple enough to be read and understood of all honest men, and surely that man is most honest who takes the Bible at its own word, and employs his learning and ability to report to the world what the Bible really is, and what the Bible really says. And in such an issue as the present it is more seemly and more worthy, if not also more honest, to study God's own facts concerning the Bible, which in truth are God's own words and requirements as to our belief and duty relative to the Bible, than to make a piteous appeal to "the chamber

of affliction, the house of mourning, the bed of sickness, or the agony of the dying." Such an appeal is the more to be deprecated when the point submitted for decision is not the point which is in debate. To say nothing of the absurdity of asking a dying girl what she thought of the authenticity of the second Epistle of Peter, (so called,) what answer could she give were she asked for the correct translation and the true meaning of Paul's words, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," (2 Tim. iii. 16.) If able to answer at all she might reply "what I know of the Bible is this, namely, that it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," (17). And knowing this she would know what Paul meant, for it is what he declared inspired Scripture to be; and she would know enough, know all that needs to be known or can be known for the practical guidance of life; and this her knowledge is held no less by the Essayists and Reviewers than by their accusers. Mr. Stowell puts a false issue when he makes the question to be inspiration or no inspiration. Doubtless there is inspiration in the Bible. The sole question asks, Is the inspiration in the letter or the spirit of the book? Does it permeate the Bible and making every part true make every part obligatory? Then why do not our spiritual authorities keep the law of Moses? Do they reply the Gospel has superseded the law? If so, the latter and the smaller part of the Bible cancels the former and the larger part;—and all is inspired, all infallible, all obligatory. Here however I place myself under an impenetrable shield. Jesus in his sermon on the Mount has revised the religion of the Old Testament, abrogating this and supplementing that. Two instances must suffice. The Old Testament enjoins, "Perform unto Jehovah thine oaths," "but I say unto you," adds Christ, "Swear not at all; but let your communications be yea, yea; nay, nay." The Old Testament enjoins "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;" "but I say unto you," adds Christ, "Resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also," (Matt. v. 33, seq.) Can there be a plainer contradiction? Are both commands inspired? Then inspiration is against inspiration. Are both infallible? then one infallible abrogates the other. Are both obligatory? then you are to do and not to do the same thing. If both are not

inspired which is? Either or neither? And how am I to judge? A judge there must be since an option has to be made. You say I must judge. Then you make me a judge of inspiration, and so lose the infallible authority you want; for I a fallible judge can never give an infallible decision. Here you will probably begin to call me an infidel. It would serve your purpose better to drive me from my position, or to repair the breaches made in your own. In truth you do not believe in the infallibility of even Jesus Christ much less of the Bible in general. Disprove my words by swearing not at all, and by turning the left cheek to him who smites you on the right. Indeed I know no one who more frequently or more openly disobeys Christ than the zealous clergymen on whose words I am animadverting, for while he regards Rome as the incarnation of evil, he never ceases to resist evil, with as much conscious Christian innocence as if the Great teacher himself had omitted the "not."

If we attempt in one or two particulars to forecast the future as modified by the volume of "Essays and Reviews," we are naturally led to ask in the first place what will be the upshot of the present excitement. It will be short-lived. Like similar movements in the state church it will be short-lived. A state church is, as such, adverse to a deep and living earnestness. In the present instance there is little reality. The bulk of the protestors have no personal knowledge of what it is against which they raise their voice. Were they acquainted with the volume they are totally disqualified for sitting in judgment on its contents. They have a certain set of theological opinions. These they identify with the Gospel. *Their* opinions they do not find in the volume. In consequence the volume is hostile to the Gospel. What remains but to cry it down? This is the general state of the clerical mind. As to the real questions at issue it possesses scarcely the faintest glimmer. In Biblical studies, "in the grounds and objects of religious knowledge"; in points touching the vitals even of religion itself—the bulk of the clergy know little of any description, and all but nothing do they know of what has been thought out and published by some of the greatest minds and largest hearts that ever upheld and adorned the Church of Christ. The last half century is to them as if it had never been, in nearly all that concerns that which they prefer to teach and maintain. Yet

the last half century has virtually revolutionised religion. Never since the days of Christ, never with the sole exception of the Reformation, (and I hardly know that I ought to make that exception), was there a period so pregnant with religious change and renewal as that which, speaking somewhat more widely, began with the last quarter of the last century and continues to the present hour. It is not merely that old concrete forms of doctrine have crumbled away. It is not merely that religious thought has been re-cast from one end of civilised Europe to the other. It is not merely that the first minds in all departments of secular study and pursuit, have moved more or less to a distance from the beliefs, sympathies, and aims of the Churches recognised or set up at the Reformation. It is not merely that our own most healthy and vigorous literature has broken, wholly and for ever broken, with orthodoxy even in its less attenuated forms. But as underlying these great ordinal changes, new principles have come to be recognised, and new powers are in energetic action, which make the re-establishment of the old creeds impossible, and are bearing all cultivated persons—bearing many even unconsciously—to new and nobler conception of all divine realities. Of this tendency the “Essays and Reviews,” is at once a product, a witness, and an instrument. Its authors have partaken of that higher, broader, and deeper continental culture to which I have referred, and which coming, as it does primarily, from the great arsenal of thought, and source of light and power, Germany, the land of Luther, the father of the Reformation, will spread, as it is rapidly spreading, first over all Europe and then over the civilized world. The effect of the diffusion on the ignorantists of all churches is foretold in the effect produced by the Reformation on the same class of persons. In these great revolutions of thought you must yield or be swept away. Even the stars disappear when the sun is up. So the monks vanished when the Bible was printed. Equally were the Bishops, the deans, the priests of all classes, corrected or replaced, here in England, as the flame of God went over the land, which Luther had received from on high, and gave to Tyndale; who (burnt to death for his pains,) handed the blazing torch to so many faithful hands, that darkness was no longer possible, though the powers of darkness confederated to extinguish the light of heaven. Similar changes are impending. Already the tide is rising.

Happy those who flee to the ark provided of God in the simple and all-sufficing Gospel of his Son.

The futility of the present excitement becomes the more apparent when we discern the real nature of the issue. Its originators declare that the issue is simply that of truth against error. What, are they then infallible! Is the archbishop of Canterbury the pope of Rome! A prompt denial will be given to the implications. In word denied, the implication has strong ground in fact. If what is called the evangelical church has not in some way deluded itself into the belief of its infallibility, its tone of denunciation is inexplicable. Among its lights there are men, no few, who, though they do not pretend to be free from the possibility of error, are quite sure they are never wrong. It is only such a confidence that can explain their burning zeal and heavy condemnations. "Believe me or perish" is, in effect said by them incessantly, and could in no way be said by any one, who, whatever his theory, did not in fact consider himself infallible. But such a pretention is simply ludicrous. You are of one opinion, I am of another, which is right?—that is the issue in all these dogmatical and critical questions. That issue is fairly joined in the volume under consideration. Too long has evangelical orthodoxy put itself forward as the representative of Christianity. Too long have men been led to identify Christianity with its irrational creed, narrow spirit, and aversion to science, culture, and innocent recreation. One consequence has been an evil alternative. This or infidelity? The continuation of Christianity in many a mind has been made dependent on which side of that alternative was taken. But if any Christianity depends on your creed, then the strength of your creed is the measure of my hold on Christianity. The strength of your creed is but the strength of your opinion. Let that opinion break down in but one part, my basis is gone. You do your best to take from me self-reliance. You tell me that reason is unreasonable. You tell me that my heart is untrustworthy as being corrupt and rotten. All this you do in order to make me submissive illapse of what you consider a higher power. But suppose the light that is in me, the power I have of God, my inborn moral liberty—which you have but lulled to sleep—is awakened by some true voice from a brother man, or some act of Divine Providence. At once I see the hollowness of your whole system. But to me that system is the Gospel. In

consequence I become an unbeliever. The words describe the way in which tens of thousands have been alienated from Christ. How needful then is another and a truer exposition of Christianity. God be thanked that he has sent forth these essays to open an alternative of faith to those who have been unchristianized or are being unchristianized by the dogmatic and unnatural absurdities of evangelical orthodoxy.

Here however I must guard against being misunderstood as if I held that religion had no better ground than opinion. True indeed it is that on opinion depend all mere matters of opinion, such as the creeds of all churches embody. But these matters of opinion lie on the outside of religion. Religion itself is independent of them. Religion having its roots in God, has its seat in man, and is there, in man's soul, fed, nurtured and made strong by the universe, the Bible, Divine providence and domestic intercourse. Religion thus understood is a great vivifying restorative and ennobling power, of which Christ is at once the focus and the representative. In him all are one, as all are safe, who worship God in spirit and in truth. Beyond this, moral and spiritual power is the broad and barren region of human opinion. It is only when we come to the essence of religion in the simple love and service of God through Christ; it is only when we come to the practical experiences of the Christian life, as they appear in "faith, hope, and charity," that we quit the religion of opinion to enter the religion of certainty, and in that peaceful and serene religion all who love Christ are of one heart and bear one testimony. Toward those sunny skies and verdant plains a large number, a larger number than ever before—God's own elect children—are safely and joyously travelling, led on by the Spirit of God, which is now moving on the waters of the Church, and introducing the germs of a fresh and loftier state of thought and sentiment. Foremost, at least in Great Britain, among the heralds of a truly spiritual Christianity, is the volume under consideration. The movement out of which it comes it will advance, and that the more the more it is blindly opposed.

This tendency toward union is distinctly and favourably recognised in a truly liberal passage of Professor Jowett's essay.

"No one casting his eye over the map of the Christian world, can desire that the present lines of demarcation should

always remain any more than he will be inclined to regard the divisions of Christians to which he belongs himself, as in a pre-eminent or exclusive sense, the Church of Christ. Those lines of demarcation seem to be political rather than religious; they are differences of nations, or governments, or ranks of society, more than of creeds or forms of faith. The feeling which gave rise to them has, in a great measure, passed away; no intelligent man seriously inclines to believe that salvation is to be found only in his own denomination. Examples of this "sturdy orthodoxy" in our own generation, rather provoke a smile than arouse serious disapproval. Yet many experiments show that the differences cannot be made up by any formal concordat or scheme of union; the parties cannot be brought to terms; and if they could, would cease to take an interest in the question at issue. The friction is too great when persons are invited to meet for a discussion of differences; such a process is like opening the doors and windows to put out a slumbering flame. But that is no reason for doubting that the divisions of the Christian world are beginning to pass away. The progress of politics, acquaintance with other countries, the growth of knowledge, and material greatness, *changes of opinion in the Church of England*, the present position of the Roman communion,—all these phenomena show that the ecclesiastical state of the world is not destined to be perpetual. Within the envious barriers which "divide human nature into very little pieces," (Plato Rep., iii., 395) a common sentiment is springing up, of religious truth; the essentials of Christianity are contrasted with the details and definitions of it; good men of all religions find that they are more nearly agreed than heretofore. Neither is it impossible that this common feeling may so prevail over the accidental circumstances of Christian communities, that their political or ecclesiastical separation may be little felt. The walls which no adversary has scaled may fall down of themselves. We may perhaps figure to ourselves the battle against error and moral evil taking the place of one of sects and parties."

¶ The brevity of the excitement is guaranteed by its being merely clerical. The country is parcelled out between two camps. Of these, the one is sacerdotal, the other literary and scientific. The former is engaged in active hostilities against the essayists; the latter take their part, either by a significant

silence or by a steady defence and counter assault. This division of the national mind is to be regretted. It is also full of meaning. The vessel of the church-state, held fast by her old moorings, remains where she was centuries ago, though now threatened by receding tides to be shortly "left high and dry." The vessel of the cultivated community at large floats at ease in deep water, and sails up and down in stately efficiency on the ocean, because she is fitted out with all the skill and furnished with all the active force of the most advanced civilization. In less figurative terms, all the other branches of knowledge, except Theology, are progressive; and every other profession, except the clerical, absorbs and utilises the treasures which Art and Science are gradually amassing from year to year. But if society constantly advances while the Church persistently remains still, the two are separated; the two may be separated by a wide interval, and at last, the two may be separated so as never to re-unite, unless either society fall back or the Church move on. That interval already exists. Every year does the interval widen. In no Protestant country is the interval so wide as in England. The diction of our pulpit differs from the diction of our literature. As the pulpit has a phraseology of its own, so has it a peculiar pronunciation. Distinguished from other men by his attire, the clergyman is distinguished from other men in his manners and conduct. There is one code of morality for a layman, and another for a priest. If these divergencies are to be regarded with lenity as in the main a relic of dark and sacerdotal ages, there are others which are to be deplored if not condemned, as occasioned by the immoveability of the Church. Can there, for instance, be imagined a greater diversity than the view of the universe which is presented by the Book of Common Prayer, and the "Assembly's Catechism," and the view of it taken by the Christian Philosopher? The two views differ in every important particular—God, man, time, eternity, and the relationships of each with each, together with the issue of all. On the one side is God, the universal Father, living in, through, and over all things; which are the simple pourings forth and issues of his Sovereign will; and so living in them as to make them all, in perfect freedom and continual development, fulfil the purposes of his inexhaustible goodness, each in its own order, and after the measure of its own strength, yet each ascending

ever into higher orders, until all being filled with the Spirit of God, shall accomplish exclusively and fully God's righteous will, and so be happy with a bliss which is truly divine because it is purely like God, its primal and ever-flowing source and fountain. On the other side is God creating the universe out of nothing, sitting apart from the works of his hands; making man out of the dust of the earth, and woman out of man's rib; giving them a command which he had not given them power to keep; and punishing with eternal death the misdeed of a moment; and instead of mercifully extinguishing the race, giving life to successive generations tainted with a deadly and unavoidable disease, whom he condemned to everlasting burnings, because their progenitor fell when he had not power to stand, and because they themselves fell too, because they were born as powerless as he. While such is the painful and pitiable condition of the whole race of Adam, spread over all the face of the earth, God leaving the great bulk of men in their natural condition, makes a special revelation of his will to a mere handful of his creatures, on whom however he bestows a Saviour, but not until the favoured tribes have lived ignorant of the way of salvation for some fifteen hundred years. At the end of that time however, he himself becomes incarnate in the son of a Jewish peasantess, on a strip of land which borders a small margin of the Mediterranean Sea. Having thus taken a human body, he offers himself a sacrifice to himself for either the elect and predestined few, or for such as may accept the redemption purchased with his blood. The final issue is that the bulk of God's intelligent creatures are still lost—lost in every generation from the reign of Augustus until that of Victoria, and the bulk will in all probability be lost from the reign of Victoria to the end of time; so that the lost outnumber the saved as the hosts of heaven outnumber the greater planets, or the sands on the seashore outnumber the cattle grazing in the neighbouring meadows. This is the view of the universe taken by the Church; that is the view of the universe taken by the Christian philosopher. The two are as wide as the poles asunder. The two can by no theological mechanism be brought into harmony and unison. If the one is true the other is false. If the one is taught by the spirit of the Bible and attested by the spirit of the age; by the same great authorities is the other condemned. The final issue it is easy to predict. The final issue

is foretold in the sublime, tender, human and divine life of Christ. Yes, Christ is one with the best tendencies of our day, for they are the fruit and the reward of his perfect obedience to the perfect will of the one common Father. And as Christ is ever now going forth in a new outpouring of his own spirit of true liberty, practical wisdom, brotherly love and divine aid, so he holds the foremost place, and leads the way for the ever-augmenting band who seek God and truth, and moral power, as the supreme object of their existence. Such men whether in the Church of England or out of it, whether lay or clerical, whether Protestant or Catholic, are the sons of God and the brethren of Christ, of this generation; they will also be the lights of the next generation, and probably of generations to come. Where they are, there is the ark of the covenant, and as the ark of the covenant was in the van of the Hebrew pilgrims, so do they go before to prepare the way for their brethren. If the clergy are a part of that vanguard happy for them, happy for their church, and happy for all. If the clergy still loiter in the rear, they cannot fail to be left in the wilderness, for the armies of the living God must keep advancing continually, until having passed the Jordan, they enter the promised land and enjoy the rest prepared for their ever-enduring recompense.

Among the effects which the book we are studying will produce is the increase of the number of those divinely called and divinely appointed leaders who are heroically marshalling the way out of darkness into light, and out of bondage into freedom. The volume of "Essays and Reviews" is a free and bold word for God, truth, and liberty. What courage was needed to utter that word can be known only to those who are personally acquainted with the venerable associations, the refined endearments, the attractive prospects which bind men, so learned and so able as these writers, to the church of their childhood, the church of their fathers, the church of the highest orders in the realm, the Sovereign herself included. The mere tie of university fellowship is as strong as it is graceful and elevating. To be imbued with the same liberal studies; to cherish the same refined tastes; to have in common pure and lofty recollections and bright and worthy hopes; to look back on a common boyhood of letters and recreations, and to look forward to an old age sunned, warmed, and cheered by memories of saintly scholars and more saintly benefactors,

trained within the same hallowed walls and prepared there for the same noble struggle in life and the same glorious victory in death—all these pure influences which belong to men who have drunk of the same living fountain of human and divine culture, unite to make the place of one's education dear and venerable, and to interpose all but insuperable obstacles to any step even likely to lead away from its inspirations and its sanctities. Think not that these magic bonds can be lightly broken. To endanger their permanence seems like an act of impiety. How great the daring then required to defy the risk of such a torrent of abuse as that now poured out on the patient heads of these essayists and reviewers. It is no small pain to encounter coldness where you had been used to cordiality. It is no small pain to see society frown and repel you, when a little before it was covered with smiles at your approach. It is no small pain to find the avenues to professional usefulness and distinction closed and barred against you. It is no small pain to know that the very means of subsistence for your family are being frittered away together with your once honourable name. It is no small pain to hear yourself called fool by friends and see the scornful triumph of your foes. It is no small pain to be conscious of failure in the one great object of your public life. Nor is it a small risk to incur the possibility of the loss of professional rank together with that of social position. But all these things united come not up to the penalty attempted to be inflicted on these seven scholars by the body to which they belong and of which they are some of the principal ornaments. Of the "hailstone and fire," of condemnation hurled at the delinquents judge from the words used by Bishop Trower, when lately, he put into the hands of the primate of all England, the adverse address of eight thousand clergymen. The speaker declared that they, (himself and the eight thousand for whom he spoke) thought it important it should be known that the publication of "Essays and Reviews" had been received with *a cry of horror and indignation* by the clergy of all kinds in all parts of the country." The piercing tones of that cry must have been anticipated as a possibility by the writers. And yet they broke silence. It was a courageous as well as conscientious act. In the way of Divine Providence they had been led to question or deny accepted doctrines and to see, embrace, and value new truths. They found the change

a great relief. They found it as salutary as pleasant. Thus placed they were called to make their light known. Regardless of consequences they publish their thoughts, desirous only to make others as free and happy as themselves. What else could they do? Were they to incur reproof from the Master by hiding their light under a bushel? Were they to disregard the requirements of conscience? Were they to disown the peril in which the Gospel stands, arising from the great gulph opened between it and the world's highest thought and noblest strivings, by a zeal without knowledge? They delivered their souls, and so have gained an imperishable name for honesty and moral courage. The example will make itself felt. Already it is working powerfully in the great numbers of especially young men, in all denominations, nor least in the church established by law; who, knowing the insecurity of the old foundations, are seeking "a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God:" and others who, having renounced the old and accepted the new, hesitate to make their change known, lest they should act rashly or indiscreetly; and again, others who have been constrained to part with the traditions of men, once accounted the truth of God, without being able to find a better way, and now stand shivering on the brink of a chilling disbelief. To all such the book will be like a ray of light from heaven. It will open the eyes of the blind, it will guide the wanderer, it will decide the wavering, it will hearten and determine the timid. Already, I doubt not, it has produced these desirable effects on a large scale, and that not the less because the volume instead of been answered has been abused. To the young at least, virtuperation in place of argument is repulsive. It calls forth their generous sympathies, and sometimes places them by the side of the weak and the ill-used when they could not have been brought thither by any other consideration. It is indeed a feature of our national character to stand by the proscribed. Sacerdotal maledictions have, down from the days of the Saviour, worked in direct opposition to the wishes of their utterers. Balaam's is not the only curse which God has turned into a blessing.

It is not an uncharitable proposition that the essayists would have acted more worthily, and have more effectually advanced religious truth, had they of their own accord quitted the ecclesiastical position they hold. To this opinion I am

myself inclined. But I, at the same time, confess that I am not in a condition to know, still less to feel and appreciate, all the circumstances and considerations of their case. So far as my knowledge does extend, I see much to commend and admire. I will own the good, the large positive good. I will respectfully welcome those men as able and faithful fellow workers. And, had I the power, I would throw before them a protecting shield, and defend them all the more zealously the more bitterly they are assailed. At the same time I congratulate all who like myself stand on the outside of these mouldering bonds and restraints, and in full enjoy the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and together with the liberty, somewhat, I trust, of the freshness and vigour which liberty fosters. And should the result of the persecution which still extends itself, be that the essayists quit the Anglican Church, they will, when wholly free, not value their privilege less, because each may then say, "With a great sum obtained I this freedom."

An altogether different course has been set before them. They must recant. An entire recantation, declares the bishop of Oxford, is the sole condition on which their misconduct can be condoned. I can imagine with what virtuous indignation the requirement was heard by the essayists. The very spirit of persecution have we here: the very spirit of inquisition. "Down on your knees and, like the humiliated Galileo, declare that what you know or believe to be true, is not true." Why, what idea does the Protestant inquisitor entertain of a man's thoughts? Do his thoughts hang so loosely about an honest man, that he can throw them off at will—as you would throw off a light cloak, on an outburst of the sun in spring? This may be the case with men who adopt opinions, but not with those who form them. The requirement is an insult, for it supposes that the book is a product of caprice, or self-will, or the love of notoriety. The requirement, however, reflects disadvantageously on none but its author. The requirement also involves absurdity. It is an "*entire* recantation" that is demanded. In other words, the essayists are to say, "no," to all to which they have said "yes," and "yes" to all to which they have said "no." At any rate they must contradict whatever is contrary to popular belief. Whether the white sheet of penitence will also be imposed, I know not; but this I know, that in presence of the civilised world, in presence of the

scholars and men of science of all lands, and in presence of free churches and their ministers, wherever found, the essayists must disavow the principal positions of their volume, and avow the opposite. Then, having thus degraded themselves by eating their own words, they will be received back into favour, and may hope for advancement in the church ! And this to come from professed disciples, the only orthodox disciples of him who said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth ; every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John xviii., 37).

But let us for a moment see in one or two particulars, what this recantation involves. The entire recantation extorted from Dr. Temple, would compel him to unsay these words :—

"The second stage in the education of man was the presence of our Lord upon the earth. Those few years of his divine presence seems, as it were, to balance all the systems and creeds and worships which preceded, all the Church's life which has followed since. Saints had gone before, and saints have been given since ; great men and good men had lived among the heathen ; there were never at any time examples wanting to teach either the chosen people or any other. But the one example of all examples came in "the fulness of time," just when the world was fitted to feel the power of his presence. Had the revelation been delayed until now, assuredly it would have been hard for us to recognise his divinity ; for the faculty of faith has turned inwards, and cannot now accept any outer manifestations of the truth of God. Our vision of the Son of God is now aided by the eyes of the apostles, and by that aid we can recognise the express image of the Father."

Here we have a no scanty confession of positive religious beliefs—first the Father, second the divine presence of the Lord on earth, the one example of all examples ; third the revelation to man thus made ; fourth the Church as the great result, and fifth in the Church, saintly men and women—and all this so arranged and so fixed relatively to the state of the world as to be no less timely and seasonable than salutary. Yet all this must be unsaid for nothing less than "an entire recantation" will satisfy. And why ? Because it runs not in the old ruts of traditional phraseology, and because it is said that "great and good men have lived among the heathen,"

thus impeaching the dogma of original sin; and that "there were at no time examples wanting to teach other nations besides the chosen one"—thus denying the exclusiveness of God's Providence and the exclusiveness of Christ's redemption.

Next, Professor Williams must revoke for himself as well as Bunsen, the following not inconsiderable statement of positive belief. "Bunsen stands at the farthest pole from those who find no divine footsteps in the Gentile world. He believes in Christ because he first believes in God and in mankind. In this he harmonises with the Church fathers before Augustin, and with all our deepest evangelical school. In handling the New Testament he remains faithful to his habit of exalting spiritual ideas, and the leading character by whose personal impulse they have been stamped on the world. Other foundations for healthful mind or durable society he suffers no man to lay, save that of Jesus Christ the Son of God. In him he finds brought to perfection that religious idea which is the thought of the eternal; without conformity to which, our souls cannot be saved from evil."

Finally. Professor Jowett must recall these statements. "The life of Christ, regarded quite naturally as of one who was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin, is the life and centre of Christian teaching. There is no higher aim which the preacher can propose to himself than to awaken what may be termed the feeling of the presence of God and the mind of Christ in Scripture; not to collect evidences about dates and books, or to familiarise metaphysical distinctions; but to make the heart and conscience of his hearers bear him witness, that the lessons which are contained in Scripture—lessons of justice and truth, lessons of mercy and peace, of the need of man and the goodness of God to him, are indeed not human but divine." And here I may transcribe the truly pious words with which Dr. Jowett concludes his essay:—

"He who takes the prevailing opinions of Christians, and decks them out in their gayest colours, who reflects the better mind of the world to itself, is likely to be its favourite teacher. In that ministry of the gospel, even when assuming forms repulsive to persons of education, no doubt the good is far greater than the error or harm. But there is also a deeper work, which is not dependent on the opinions of men in which (opinions) many elements combine, some alien to religion, or

accidentally at variance with it. That work can hardly expect to win much popular favour, so far as it runs counter to the feelings of the religious parties; but he who bears a part in it may feel a confidence, which no popular caresses or religious sympathy could inspire, that he has by a divine help been enabled to plant his feet somewhere beyond the waves of time. He may depart hence before the natural term, worn out by intellectual toil, regarded with suspicion by many of his contemporaries, yet not without a sure hope that the love of truth, which men of saintly lives often seem to slight, is nevertheless accepted before God."

The fine spirit which breathes in these words assure us that at least one of the seven essayists has counted the cost of his moral daring, and will suffer any penalty short of recantation. That spirit is indeed, in some measure, and in varying degrees, the spirit of the volume. Whatever I might think of the soundness of its learning, or the justifiableness of its hostilities, I could not fail to reverence the pure and elevated moral tone by which it is pervaded. That moral tone springs from a yet deeper source. Religion is the very essence of the book. Yes, call them what you will, you cannot, unless you are overrun with prejudice, deny that these essayists are pre-eminently religious men. There is more real religion in the book than in all the creeds that were ever composed. And more faith too is there in the book than in all the articles of the Church of England. These men believe more than many of their episcopal assailants. Their faith is far wider, broader, deeper; it is also more vivid and more practical. You say they deny. I know they deny, but they deny not in a spirit of scepticism, but of faith. Like "The Great One" they have faith in truth because they have faith in God. And having faith in truth they seek it with all their heart, soul, and strength; and when they are compelled to deny, they deny only to affirm. A volume breathing such a spirit must do good. It will accomplish a great work—a work greater even than the breaking up of decaying traditions and manifest falsities—the very work of God, that namely of spreading the free, healthy, vigorous, large and loving spirit of Christ. It will do much to religionise the spirit of free enquiry. It will demonstrate the essential harmony which exists between true science and real religion. It will win over to the cause of the Gospel men who have been trained in the rigorous logic and multiform

knowledge of the age, but who have been alienated from the Church by the narrowness of its representatives. It will show that it is possible to unite honest doubt and honest dis-belief with faith the loftiest, the most comprehensive, the most reasonable, and the most intense. And it will illustrate and enforce the truth that human life, whether clerical or lay, is of small account unless when inspired, led and ennobled by the Gospel.

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VIEWS AND AIMS.

BY T. COLANI.

Two systems divide the minds of men—Orthodoxy and Rationalism ; they do not satisfy us.

Orthodoxy has the prestige of antiquity ; it is in some sort the legitimate system of religious opinion. If however we survey its history, we cannot admit that it proceeds directly from the Gospel. In the sixteenth century the Reformers found Catholicism reigning without a rival, the church and the pope, substituted for Christ, demanded obedience as mediators between God and man ; while, under their influence, salvation was attainable by certain external forms, or even by money. These monstrosities appeared, it is true, before a free salvation was proclaimed aloud by the powerful voice of Luther. But was the reform complete ? Did it reach the root of the evil ? Was dogma entirely transformed by the principle of "justification by faith" ? We do not think so : and Protestant orthodoxy seems to us the offspring of the Reformation wedded to the scholastic philosophy.

In its immediate desire for unity, Catholicism had linked the present to the past in order to enchain the future. It had raised the vast pyramid of tradition ; which had for its foundation the writings of the Apostles, and, lower down, the books of the Old Testament ; the upper layers were formed of the decrees of oecumenical synods ; and each age depositing thereon the documents of its belief, became a sacred basis for its successor. Protestant orthodoxy does not acknowledge a great value in the edifice taken as a whole, but it accepts its

principle ; it even carries that principle to an extreme. Arbitrarily conceding an authority to the three first centuries which followed the birth of Christ, it divinises the first ; not satisfied with sedulously guarding the sacred vase which contains the truth, it adores it as a relic ; it makes of the New Testament, and even of the Old, a code miraculously descended from the skies. Catholic tradition left some latitude to the mind ; each generation, provided it kept in a line with the preceding, marched ahead, perfecting certain points of doctrine. Under the strict orthodoxy of our church, we had no power for progress ; God had promulgated his law, his system of dogma ; that we dare not touch. But I ask, Where then is the liberty promised to the children of God ? If my regenerated conscience cannot guide me, if I need new tables of the law, in what is Christianity superior to Mosaism ? If faith in the Redeemer, based on authentic documents, suffices not to save me, how did Christ die for our sins ? You impose a yoke heavier then that of circumcision ; and yet you dare believe yourselves disciples of Saint Paul !

Orthodoxy could not so readily have abandoned the law of liberty, that is, in a word, salvation by Christ alone, had its Christ been the same as the Christ whose life John narrates, and whose love Paul displays. It does indeed inculcate two natures in Christ ; but of these the one is annihilated by the other. Ceaselessly do we hear it anathematise those who deny his deity ; but does it ever, in either sermons or books, insist on his humanity ? Do they believe in the reality of his combats, his struggles ? or do they not rather see in those incidents a part written beforehand, which the second person in the Trinity has to perform ? Docetism is the logical consequence of this system, as well as of Catholicism. Humanly, Christ is with both a totality of appearances. In the system expiation is not a real sacrifice, but a legal fiction, agreed on

in heaven and represented on earth. Then comes substitution—another fiction; the obedience of Christ even to death—fiction, still fiction, for that death is only a scenic representation of a fixed decree, realised from all eternity. Metaphysics put in the place of history, abstraction superceding life,—this is the great fault of orthodoxy, it rests not on facts, but dogmas.

The impersonal element thus displayed in the work of Christ, presents itself in the faith of the Christian; for since the former is a fiction, the latter can be only a formality, an *opus operatum*, a dead work. Doubtless here, as elsewhere, Protestantism has set a step toward the truth; the *opus operatum* is in some sort transferred to the interior of man; it is no longer his purse that saves him; nor is it a certain movement of the body; it is a state of his intelligent nature. Faith is a belief. Of that faith, which nevertheless produces justification, man is not the free author; he does not accept pardon by means of an act of the will; faith is imposed on him. Grace is not satisfied with drawing the sinner, it takes possession of him, and transforms him without any co-working on his part. In this too exclusively intellectual, and almost purely passive character of faith, a deep injury is inflicted on the moral consciousness.

Orthodoxy (we say it with grief) singularly derogates from the dignity of Christ. It all but takes from him his humanity. In doing so it robs him of his reality. It establishes by his side a second revelation in the scripture, thus proclaiming the insufficiency of the first. Very far from making the personal Christ its entire dogma, it banishes him into a corner; shuts him up in a chapter; and invests with the same inviolability as Christ himself, the recitals of the Chronicles, and the calculations of the Apocalypse.

Rationalism is a reaction called forth by the doctrine of salvation by magic—such as is taught by orthodoxy. Taking it in its origin, among the English deists, in the German Semler, Lessing, Kant; in the French *encyclopédistes*—everywhere we see a protest; accompanied, it is true by impure elements; but still a protest of the conscience against a clerical Judaism, against an arbitrary law interposed between man and God. However vague the term rationalist may be in theology, all those to whom it applies place, as the first condition of truth, its conduciveness to morality. And they are right, for the moral life, much more than thought, constitutes morality; the kernel of our being, it subjects to itself all the rest as envelope and organ.

But rationalism is not of Christian birth. If it raises itself against orthodoxy, it is not because orthodoxy misrepresents the sacrifice of the cross, but because it violates the human conscience. For us indeed to protest in the name of conscience, and to protest in the name of Christ, is all one—not so for rationalism. The Evangelical narratives are not, in its eyes, a divine balsam which heals the most secret wounds of the heart; it finds them little conformed to its idea of a perfect religion; and while, professing toward them a respect, often sincere and deep, it labours to annul them, and to free itself from their embarrassments. The bond which connects it with Christianity is a simple matter of habit, and must, sooner or later, come to an end; the two are never more than set side by side; they are never united; they remain for ever strangers to each other; now he that is not for Christ is against Christ.

It is in truth remarkable that this system manifests eagerness to reduce Jesus and his work to diminutive proportions. Its promoters take him from his place at the basis of faith,

to make him into a simple promulgator of the dull and colourless lessons of natural religion. They cast the facts of the Gospel into the bed of Procrustes; that bed is reason, *their* reason; what reason! It is not that faculty of the mind which regulates our thoughts, sets them in relative order, carries back everything to unity, excludes what is contradictory, —logic, dialectics, admirable and all-powerful organ of our intelligence! When rationalism appeals to the sovereignty of reason, it means something different to this;—common-sense; party opinion; shop philosophy, so proud of its little wisdom, turning up its eyes at everything new, great, sublime; eminently sceptical and materialistic, it believes only what it daily sees with its own eyes, and what it touches with its own hands; it is the sworn enemy of enthusiasm, of faith, of devotedness. This temper infests all the schools of rationalism. How then can they understand Christianity! I don't ask, how can they understand its spirit, but its history.

If reason so much preached by the system is a conventional thing, not less conventional is its morality; and there lies at once its strength and its weakness. Rationalism absolutely disowns sin; it is an imperfection, inseparable from a finite being, not a fault; disowning sin, it does not see the need of redemption: it has no sympathy with the absorbing majesty of man's wretchedness and restoration. In consequence, the ethical as well as the moral world of the Gospel is a sealed book to rationalism. The morality to which it invites us is not holiness, but probity; it would make of us not perfect beings, but respectable people. We repel rationalism more decidedly than we repel orthodoxy; the latter, in spite of its grave errors, holds by its roots to the cross; rationalism is the negation of the cross. Let not our words be misunderstood: we speak not of individuals, nor even of the system, but of the principle of the system. Rationalism is irreligion, ming-

ling with the Christian sap, while orthodoxy is an amalgam of the Gospel with Judaism.

Few words will be requisite to establish the position which we ourselves wish to occupy.

Christianity is specially a fact; it is the life and the teachings of Jesus; his miracles, his death, his resurrection; and then the spontaneous adherence of the sinful soul to this superhuman revelation; the intimate union of the individual to his Saviour; with the felicity of which that union is the source, and the divine favour it bestows on the soul. These, we repeat, are facts. The intelligence of the christian cannot refuse to study them, to understand them, to give them a clear and definite form. Such is the origin of dogma,—a moveable element, without doubt, but still an integral part of religion. It is its envelope, its body; intended to serve as an organ of the soul, but which may also become its coffin.

Theology then is a religious science, which first contrives to establish the facts, and then explains them according to laws and principles. It is composed of two parts,—it is history and it is philosophy.

As history, it embraces the entire development of humanity, of which Christ is the pivot; and in this view one can hardly blame the narrowness of orthodoxy enough, which sees no preparation for the Gospel except in the Jewish nation. History places before us, the human race, which God has never abandoned, sighing, in a thousand different languages, and under a thousand mythological forms, for the restoration of the divine image: it follows in all its windings, through eighteen centuries, the river which takes its rise at Calvary; it recounts its beneficent effects; it also shows what impure streams entered its bosom, discolouring its waters and disturbing its movements. But specially does it take its seat at the foot of the cross; for its great task is to re-constitute the features of

the Son of man ; to pourtray that figure, so meek, so mild, so pitiful yet so sublime, so terrible in his perfect sanctity ; that endearing figure which ceaselessly attracts us and dominates us with all its incomparable elevation. Those facts we shall study without any preconceived idea, and without fearing to shock either rationalist or orthodox prejudices. The truth, nothing but the truth ! Come to us, you who are weary of a conventional and *a priori* history, exegesis, criticism : you are ours. Come and clear the ground ; come and cast down the walls which have been built around the Saviour ; let Christ appear before us in all his reality, in all his glory.

During many centuries men have been discussing the relations of speculative theology with philosophy ; and in truth, if Christianity is a system of supra-rational doctrines, the question is serious, or rather it is insoluble. But for us who see in doctrines formulas of a divine fact, it is not so ; there is no dualism, no antagonism. Dogma blends with philosophy ; it is philosophy handled by a christian ; it is specially the philosophy of history, the explanation of religious facts. Now, what is the bond between all these facts which are summed up in the words sin and redemption ? What is their essence ? The moral life—that substance of our being ; and it is by the attentive study of liberty, of personality ; it is by piercing the thick folds of the will, that theological science will succeed in renewing itself. Christianity especially has to be re-constituted from this point of view. Jesus Christ is the point of union between heaven and earth ; he is a founder of a new humanity ; there is a double problem which contains all dogma in itself—the relation of the Saviour to the Creator, and the mutual relations which are established between the Saviour and ourselves. But as long as, sundering these two, you shall place side by side two abstract and metaphysical natures as in Christ, you will have no formula adequate to

christian faith, for christian faith requires reality before all things, and in consequence it requires the unity, the personality of our Lord. The problem of Christianity is not essentially different from that of the existence of each man. Every individual is the product of three agents; he springs from human parents, by his education; he is born by the good pleasure of God, who raises him up when he pleases and where he pleases; he is the product of his own liberty—he makes himself what he is. These three agents we find in Jesus Christ with an intensity altogether peculiar. The child of humanity, to humanity he belongs; subject to trial, he came off victorious, and made himself holy; and he has his roots in the depths of the Divinity. At once, Jesus of Nazareth, the second Adam, and the son of God,—in him behold the author and the finisher of our faith. We assert it with full conviction—there lies the germ of a new developement of science; by that view Christianity may resume its empire over the masses, and resolve the great question of solidarity and individuality, which weighs so heavily on the world. When we see coming forth on all sides, that pantheism, which has long been hidden in modern thought, and even in the theology of eminent christians, we feel it to be a duty to combat that enemy under all his disguises, to defend courageously the precious deposit contained in the Gospel, to proclaim also personal liberty, and responsibility, to show in Jesus Christ the perfect and historical realisation of the human ideal, to insist incessantly on the necessity of an act of the will to the salvation he offers.

We do not present to our readers any fixed system; we have none; we are *asking for* one conscientiously, patiently; with all our contemporaries we are in the midst of an epoch of transition. Those who may think that therefore we are in the pangs of doubt, we are able to relieve in full. Our labour

in the way of theological revision is indeed sometimes hard, and we have passed through painful crises when we have had to tear out of our hearts a thousand inveterate, and up to then, sacred prejudices; but each of those crises has changed into a triumph, and brought us nearer to Christ, making him to us more immediate, more living. We wish to be well understood. It is a strange mistake to accuse us of intellectualism, or of sacrificing our faith to some fancied Moloch of reason. Nothing can be more untrue. With all the faculties of our soul we embrace the salvation which is in Christ. Jesus is the object of our love—true love comprises instinct, will, intelligence. We love Christ because he first loved us. We scrutinise and analyse our love in order to purify it, to strengthen it by contemplating the perfection of its object. We have no division in our Christianity—this for the head, that for the heart, the third for the life; but we aim at flooding it with the entire stream of our being. The task is great and noble; by our own strength we could not accomplish it—we should fail miserably. But He, for whose glory we intend to labour, will not desert us, but rather shew himself mighty in our weakness.

Such is our hope. Such are our principles. We call around us those who dissatisfied with the forms of an antiquated system of dogma, and fully admitting salvation by Christ alone, desire to labour in raising the new edifice which is to be built on the solid basis of him who is at once the Son of man and the Son of God. We ask you not to receive all the ideas we have propounded. Not a school, not a system, but a tendency is that which we represent. The device on our banner is *The True Development of Christian Thought*. We repeat the motto of the theologians of the sixteenth century: *In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas*; with us only one thing is necessary—*The Gospel*; for all the rest we demand the most complete liberty.

MODERN MATERIALISM AND ITS CAUSES.

BY DR. SCHOLTEN.

There has in the last few years appeared on the territory of science a phenomenon well worthy the attention not only of those who study nature, but also of philosophers and theologians ; for it concerns the highest interests of humanity, morality, and religion. Materialism, though often, and as was thought, solidly confuted, has raised its head in a manner which renders an examination of its pretensions altogether necessary. It is a study of this kind that we now propose to go through. We shall first describe materialism in its principal features, and then we shall endeavour to indicate and probe the causes of its periodical appearance in the modern world.

Materialism is that scientific tendency according to which all the phenomena of nature and of human life are deduced from matter and explained accordingly. Matter is the sole and unique substance. Science is and can be only the knowledge of matter and its properties. Materialism relying on the new atomic theory and on the recent discoveries of physics and chemistry, declares that the universe is nothing else than an assemblage, a co-working of the eternal atoms, otherwise termed the ultimate particles of matter ; which, whether in consequence of a law of necessity, or by a fortuitous concurrence of circumstances, have produced the unity of the world, and the organisation of individual beings. Everything comes from a mixture of matter, in relation with its effects and its

physical laws. Organised beings themselves—the plants, the animals, man not excepted, and man too even as a spiritual being, is a purely chemical and physical product of the mixture and change of matter, indefinitely varied. Thought, self-consciousness, even the manifestations of our moral life, are simply the properties of the organism, the result of a certain arrangement of the brain and the nerves; and these in their turn, owe their existence to no other thing than the union of substances discovered therein by chemical analysis. The union of our individual consciousness is then the total collective sensation of all the individual sensations which affect the nerves; and to that collective sensation the name soul is given. Thus, professor Lehmann, of Leipsig, declares in a recent work: “As you can hardly demonstrate the existence of the force which is called vital, belonging exclusively to organised bodies, all the phenomena proper to living beings must be explainable by the laws of physics and chemistry. Those Laws alone will give us the key of the phenomena of life.”

Modern materialism does not shrink from the logical and necessary consequences of the point of view which it adopts. If everything is a chemical product of materials, mixed under the action of physical laws, or of the properties of matter, it is clear that what was formerly said of a “vital force,” or, at least, of organic life, considered as a natural force, distinct from purely physical and chemical forces, is without foundation. All idea of unity, object; every kind of teleology or aim, whether in the universe, or in individual beings; every affirmation of an organising or directing power, is nothing better than fiction. These are so many empty abstractions imposed on nature. To speak with Oerstedt, of “Spirit in Nature”,*

* See “The Soul in Nature” by Hans C. Oerstedt, translated from the German by Leonora and Joanna B. Horner; London, H. G. Bohn.

or with Alexander von Humboldt,* to see in nature the activity of the Supreme Intelligence, is pure folly. Science does not know spirit or soul, but only matter with its constant effects. Man may experience religious sentiments, whatever their cause may be, but science must disown the existence of a God. Man, the product of organisation, who is only a combination of atoms, must cease to exist when those atoms cease to exist, when those atoms separate one from another; and belief in immortality is henceforth only a chimera. Thought, like all the other faculties of man, being merely a combination of the atoms of the brain, our moral power, which, awakened by thought, calls forth sentiment and will, is nothing but a consequence of a modification in the aforementioned combination. Love and hate, virtue and vice, are the necessary results of material combinations in our human organism. Morality is thus referred to a simple physico-chemical operation; all efforts to ameliorate beings who cannot be made over afresh, is vain and superfluous, and morality is to be considered as one of the inventions suggested by egotism, against which nature may assert her solid rights, as in encountering an arbitrary despotism.

I have endeavoured to sketch, briefly and faithfully, the contemporaneous materialism, such as it appears when deduced from the premises set forth by celebrated modern naturalists—Burmeister, Pflüger, Lotze, Schleiden, Dubois-Reymond, Lehmann; such as it appears, when developed with much logic, by men like Büchner, Moleschott, Vogt, Czolbe, Max Stirner, &c. Far from me be the thought of rendering responsible for all the consequences of materialism, every one of these by whom the principle has been adopted. Thus we might cite the great physiologist, J. Müller, a declared enemy

* "Cosmos, a Physical Description of the Universe" by Alexander von Humboldt, translated from the German by E. C. Otte; London, H. G. Bohn.

of materialism, who nevertheless believes that the organic force, and all the phenomena of life, can scarcely be considered otherwise than the consequences or the properties of a certain combination of material objects. Only he limits his thesis to the field of Physiology, and forbids himself to apply it to researches which have the soul for their object. In the same way, Lotze, as a physiologist, opposes with all his strength, the hypothesis of a vital force distinct from physical and chemical forces; but, as a psychologist, he attributes, at least provisionally, to the soul a nature independent of the body, and combats materialism with much vivacity. In his "*Mikrocosmos*," he says, "Man is perhaps a unit, but he appears to me a double being. I consider the living individual as the union of a soul with a system of bodily elements."—pp. 165, 182.

The unity of consciousness proves, in his view, that the soul is not the product of the body: "A false materialism makes the Intelligence of the universe truly impossible by pretending to deduce man's mind and all its wealth, as an appendix of no importance, from the reciprocal action of material elements, such as blows and pressure, contraction and extension, mixture and dissolution." (p. 164.) But it is not only physiologists, others also, and among them the Philosopher Erdmann, who hold that the science of nature is necessarily materialistic; though it may be said that at least Erdmann seems merely to mean that the study of nature, as such, has to do with nothing but physical laws and their consequences. Theologians however have declared that materialism is the last word of science; but, after the example of the physiologist, they seek to supplement disbelieving science by either throwing themselves into the arms of ecclesiastical tradition, or by adducing the historical proofs of a supernatural revelation; or finally, by showing

in the subjective wants of man, the basis of convictions not to be attained from the processes of science.

The latter however have, in common with materialism, the pretension that science, as such, furnishes no indication of the existence of God, and the substantial unity of the human soul, any more than it gives guarantees of a moral order. He who lives morally and religiously, does so in virtue of quite different motives from those which he might obtain from science.

If materialism, as ensues from the foregoing, has occupied men's minds to such a degree that even theologians and philosophers see no other source for their faith in God, and immortality, but a refuge in the badly defended harbour of authority, or a subjective mysticism; if religion and morality are to be threatened in their existence, the moment that these tottering bases give way, it is clear that the hour is come to examine the titles of which materialism makes its boast. To what is it to be ascribed that notwithstanding consequences, which materialists refuse more readily than they avoid, this system is in a condition to exercise so great an influence, and to enroll distinguished men under its banner? I distinguish three causes of the appearance and the power of contemporary materialism:

- I. The non-philosophic study of nature.
- II. Defective psychology and metaphysics.
- III. The faith of authority.

I have indicated as the first cause of materialism, the non-philosophic study of nature. In employing the expression, "non-philosophic," I do not mean to say that among the patrons of materialism, there are not men remarkable for scientific precision, and a very delicate observation of particular facts. On the contrary, we are indebted to many among them for new explanations of purely physical phenomena relating

to life, explanations as incontestible as are the facts to which they relate. What I understand by the philosophical study of nature, is the art of considering facts as a whole, the judicious distinguishing between effects and causes, and the deduction from facts and phenomena, of rigorous logical conclusions. This criterion of true science appears to be lacking in the materialism of the present day. To justify my statement, I will for a few moments occupy a ground which is not exactly my own—that of the natural sciences. I beg then that it may be borne in mind that when I adduce natural facts, I rest not on my own experience, but on results established by such as are naturalists by profession. The science of nature in itself is beyond my personal studies; but the task of speculative philosophy is to reflect on the results of that science, on its established facts, in order to systematise them.

In the critical study of materialism it is before all things necessary to test its principle. Its affirmation is as follows :—Everything, not only in inorganic nature, but also in organic nature, is explainable by material combinations in connexion with the physical effects of light, heat, and electricity.

One thing is unquestionably proved, namely, that in organic nature, the same physical and chemical laws, to which inorganic nature is subject, are always in action. It is also a fact that all matter entering into the composition of organised beings, is open to chemical analysis. We have then no idea of explaining the phenomena of life in organic bodies by the negation of the physico-chemical laws prevailing everywhere else; nor to pretend that a substance, on entering into an organised state, must lose the properties it possessed before. But it is altogether another question whether an appeal to the laws of physics and chemistry, suffices to explain the formation of organic elements of organisms and of life.

First. Of the sixty-one simple bodies known to chemistry, only eighteen or nineteen are found in organised bodies, and as in this number some appear there only fortuitously, the number must be reduced to fifteen. Purely organic substances are composed of four—at most, five or six—simple substances. Whence such a phenomenon if physical forces, and chemical affinity alone co-operate in the formation of organic beings? Whence is it that nature, which employs so many elements in the inorganic world, is systematically limited to so small a number, and excludes all the rest, although, in part, these are found, for the plant—in the earth, and for the animal—in its sustenance. Herbivorous animals find in their food more silex or flint than anything else, and plants plunge their roots into earth formed specially of alumina (argillaceous earth) such as clay, loam, &c., yet neither they, nor those by whom they are eaten, absorb flint or clay. One of the most important elements of the globe does not enter into the composition of any living being. Scarcely any of the important elements of the earth, properly so called, lime excepted, enters into the composition of animals. Since animated beings have the power to select their elements in the earth, in the air, in the water, what reasons determine the choice? If physical forces and chemical affinity were the sole factors of the organism, how is it that the same causes in one case bring together so many elements, and in another reject so many? Let us add that while the plant is nourished by no organic matter, but assimilates simply surrounding elements, the animal is not nourished by elements, such as they are in their simple state, but solely when other organisms have converted them into organic bodies. If we grant that in this there is nothing directly contrary to materialism; does it not indicate a function of nature distinct from physical forces and chemical affinity—a function which experiment

does not establish, but which nevertheless presents itself to us as a postulate of established facts ?

Second.—If everything in organic bodies depends on chemical combination, and the action of physical forces, whence is it that the same elements which, at death, are dissolved into general nature, obeying chemical laws, and resuming the form which they had originally when out of the organism, are in the organism of such a kind that the unlimited supremacy of chemical laws, of the physical force of cohesion, is limited and modified in its effects so long as life endures ? The controlling power has been called *vital force*, the power of life ; and it has been said, the vital force exercises dominion over chemical affinity. This force, it is added, exists out of matter, and independent of matter. So far, however, as the explanation admits a dualism, as of nature, and of vital force, it must be disallowed. Such a dualism is an error of the past. It exists not in nature. But clearly a power appears which is not within the range of known chemical and physical laws ; and that power is of such a character as to modify their action, and change their results. In a word, those laws are overruled to a superior end, namely, the formation of organisms.

Third.—The circumstance that several organic substances, the physico-chemical properties of which widely differ, resolve into simple elements, identical, and of the same weight, remains absolutely incomprehensible, if we have in them only a simply chemical product, and of necessity supposes an activity of nature superior to the domain of chemistry. These bodies are called isomeric, that is, bodies having equal parts. The term was suggested by Berzelius, to designate certain compounds which contain the same elements in the same ratio, and which nevertheless possess physical and chemical properties quite distinct. The two cyanic acids are instances of the kind. They both consist of cyanogen and oxygen in the

same ratio, and have the same equivalent; yet they differ greatly in their chemical properties. Now, science has no reason to give, of the cause of this difference. The phenomenon, is indeed attributed to a difference in the arrangement of the elements; or, when the combination is only binary, the difference is ascribed to the atoms of which the simple substances are themselves composed. But this is nothing else than a refuge in ignorance. Clearly here is a cause which is beyond ascertained chemical and physical forces.

Fourth.—No more can chemistry explain why the same substances which in organised bodies are almost always in a ternary and quaternary state, present themselves, when beyond the organic domain, in the binary state, and return to it when the dissolution of the organism takes place.

Fifth.—When, in consequence of chemical combination, unity is formed, the chemical effect ceases. The chemical process has come to an end, and as long as the external circumstances remain the same, no change can take place. In organic life, on the contrary, that process is continually renewed. This fact also shews us that in organised beings there is one or more factors beyond those, the existence of which is shown by chemistry.

Sixth.—Materialism ought also to explain why, while chemistry can resolve every organic substance into its simple elements, it has never been able to affect the re-composition of a purely organic substance. Chemistry, which can produce water by combining oxygen and hydrogen, is not in a condition to produce chemically, a single organic substance—such as blood, nerve, muscle, brain; it cannot form the smallest hair, the smallest leaf, not even the smallest cellule. Though some substances, found in organic bodies, have been drawn from non-organised matter;—for example, the urea,

from the bladder; this proves nothing against our objection. For the urea is a thing which the organism secretes and repels, and as Liebig, and Eschtrecht judiciously remark, does not belong to the purely organic elements of the animal body. Liebig adds, "Never will chemistry succeed in re-producing a cellule, a muscular fibre—in a word, any part of the organism really endowed with vital properties." With inorganic substances indeed the chemist may make certain bodies that are classed among organic bodies, as sugar, lactic acid, alcohol, but according to Liebig, that is possible only in virtue of two or more organised atoms already collected, while in vain does he try to produce out of purely inorganic elements, one of those combinations. If however we may follow the same authority, those combinations are not organic, but chemic, containing parts of substances already formed under the influence of organisation. In any case, writes the physiologist, Lotze, the substances which chemistry is able to re-produce, belong not to the highest functions of organic life. All this tends to prove that, beyond physical and chemical laws, nature is in possession of a superior force.

Seventh.—When the adversaries of vitalism, to explain the phenomena of life, speak of "particular circumstances," of "quite special relations," of "extraordinary conditions," of "particular arrangement of atoms," of "a force inherent in the nerves without any analogue in all nature," of "a plastic power," and acknowledge that there are forces distinguishing animate from inanimate beings; when Lotze himself, who sees only mechanism in organisation, speaks of a chemical force peculiar to the organism, and when he sees in the relation which at once binds and distinguishes all the members of the organism, "an effect conformed to the general plan;" what do they mean by these phrases, if not that being unable to explain solely by physics and chemistry, the forma-

tion of organic beings, they are forced to take refuge in the unknown, in some cause not furnished by either physics or chemistry? If, to explain life, they appeal to the influence of light, or to the electric fluid, which, according to Dubois-Reymond, traverses all the nervous system, they forget first that the existence of such agents is itself very hypothetical, as yet, and quite as much as "the vital force," lies beyond the field of common experience; and secondly, that in acknowledging the influence of light in the development of organic beings to be considerable, their formation, and particular the life of subterraneous plants, is free from that influence; lastly, that the unquestionable co-working of physical forces—for example, of electricity—does not solve the problem of life any more than it is solved by chemical affinity alone. It is curious to observe how the same people who chase before them the darkness of an obscure phrase, such as "vital force," without the least hesitation employ in aid of their mechanical, physical, and chemical explanations, phrases, at least not less obscure, when they speak of "chemical force," "chemical affinity," "plastic power," or "extraordinary conditions."

Eighth.—Let us however admit that, according to the hope of materialism, some time or other, science, mistress of things which now escapes from her grasp, shall be able to form, by chemical means, certain organic substances; still, she must not on that account boast of having explained the union of those substances in a living and harmonious organism; and still less of having told how the union of those substances in a plant or an animal takes place constantly according to the same type. This is the reason why the botanist, Schleiden, though refusing to admit any vital force, insists on the remarkable difference which distinguishes crystallisation, in which the formative force comes from without, and acts from

without on all points, while the formative force in the organisation or formation of a cellule, comes from within, and spreads from the centre toward all the parts. The expressions which he employs, *shaping process*, *self-preserving process*, *formative impulse*, have sense only if the organism is considered as a unit, but have sense no longer if, according to materialism, we must find there only an aggregate of material things and forces.

A powerful confirmation of this point of view may be found in the fact long since recognised by naturalists, namely: that the organic unity is the more absolute in a living being according as that being is more elevated in the scale of creation. Yet indistinct in the polypus, imperfectly centered in the worm, the organic unity reaches perfection in the quadruped. This shows that central unity determines the class of organisms; the more organic a being is, the more he is one.

Ninth.—I have not yet spoken of the marvellous power called instinct, in virtue of which each animal seeks the element and the nutriment necessary for its life: the bird builds his nest, the spider spins her web, bees live in society, perfectly well ordered; the migratory bird, at the appointed time quits her abode and traverses lands and seas, and at the right season returns to the spot she had left. Come, now; try, try, and do your best, to explain this admirable harmony, out of the resources supplied by known physical and chemical means.

Tenth.—Even were we to grant materialism all we have yet denied, it would still have to explain the constant equality of the composition and temperature of the blood; its distribution over all parts of the organism, and all the complications implied in the facts of assimilation and reproduction. If you cannot satisfy such a requirement, if the hypothesis some-

times put forward of the *generatio æquivoca*, (or spontaneous formation)—another plunge into the dark abyss—must be rejected as insufficient and visibly false, nothing remains but to accuse materialism of having, contrary to sound reason, taken the effect for the cause, phenomena for their foundation, in attempting to explain the unity of an organic being by a plurality, by a concourse of distinct particles. Science, then, does not exceed her prerogative when, in addition to physical and chemical laws, she stipulates for an organising and conducting power, an organic factor, whatever name may be given to it; which is sovereign over the organic development,—an active principle or agent, which makes all the numerous physical and chemical causes it can dispose of concur to one determined end—in a word, a principle of formation which by means of materials necessary to its activity, and furnished by anterior nature, shapes the particular organism after an immutable type, and, in spite of the continual coming and going of substances, now assimilated, now rejected, constantly maintains that fundamental type, from the primitive cellule, through a long series of combinations, secretions, and assimilations. These are undeniable facts; the organism preserves its general form, whilst within that form matter ceaselessly comes and goes; notwithstanding its continual changes and exchanges with the outer world, that general form remains the same, and even conquers by its identity; it is preserved not only as an individual, but also as a genus, and shares in the general development of its kind; it does not find all its organs fully formed, as parts of a mechanism, but forms organs itself; it is at once cause and effect, *causa sui*, (its own cause) and that not only at the moment of its birth or during its growth, but also through all its existence; the products of its life are at the same time the factors of its life, so that in it means are the same as ends,

and ends are means ; each member exists only in normal relation with the whole, as the whole lives only by the normal condition of each part. These facts, which are verified by experience, find no analogy in inorganic nature ; and in reality constitute at each successive instant a direct opposition to that which takes place in inorganic nature.

Eleventh.—That agent of organic formation which, according to the data of experience, is already active in the appearance of the first germ of life, and attests its existence before the different organs necessary to life are formed by assimilation ; which, during the whole of life, and notwithstanding the constant variations of matter, always remains active, protecting the organism against injurious influences whether from within or without ; or, re-establishing it should it have suffered detriment :—this *primum agens* furnishes proof that, if in the organism there exists a great number of mixtures and combinations belonging to the sphere of physico-chemical laws, those combinations and those mixtures are in no way the fundamental cause of life, but on the contrary are subjected to a superior cause. The resemblance between the first germs of different animal species is so great that the best microscopes have given reason only to suspect some vague differences. And nevertheless those imperceptible germs, subjected to the influence of the same circumstances, develop in a manner so as to produce the numberless and enormous differences which distinguish the animal races one among the other, and in particular distinguish man from them all. Can this also be explained solely by chemistry, or does it not rather indicate an original difference, which has its base not only in the varied combinations of matter and physical forces, but in the special differences of individuals and kinds ?

Twelfth.—If we apply this consideration to man, the brain does not proceed solely, as materialism would have it, from

the union of the substances of which it is composed; thought is not the product of the physical modification of the nervous system; on the contrary, we must search for the cause of both the organism and its vital functions, in a higher region,—the central life; that is to say, in the very essence of man,—in that invisible factor which realises his organs in relation with his destiny. In the egg of the bird that first principle makes use of substances placed at its disposal by nature, in order to form a “flying-fowl.” The same in man, employing also substances, chemical and physical forces, it makes cells, muscles, and blood,—whatever is necessary to vital functions,—and subjects them to the organic unity; without being aware of what it does, it spontaneously and surely directs the formation, the development, the harmonious concurrence of the higher organs which man will need for the realisation of his destiny as a rational being. In other terms, it is not in the combination of the substances of which the nerves and brain are composed; nor in the electric currents of the organism; nor in their co-operation, that the cause of life must be looked for. It is in man himself, in that invisible unity which, from the first moment of his existence, is at the base of all his vital functions. This is the original factor, the former of the matter of the body, which causes the combinations and the laws of the physical and chemical world to concur to its own end. There is a symbolic teaching on the part of nature in the fact established by modern physiology, that the human embryo begins in a state similar to that of inferior animals, is born as an infant, and continues to unfold until it reaches spiritual perfection. This *processus vitæ* (or progression of life) bears witness to the original unity of the being called man.

Thirteenth.—In any case, materialism encounters an insuperable obstacle; that which appears in the constant identity of the organism in the midst of the perpetual change of the

substances in which the identity is realised. How, we ask, can the organism have the ground of its existence in a combination of substances which are not there at the beginning of its development, and of the presence of which, as results from the perpetual coming and going, even the essence of the plant and the animal is independent?

Fourteenth.—Let us not forget the essential fact of self-consciousness. Man has a consciousness of his identity, after years are passed, during which his brain has been completely renewed. Independently, then, of the determinate mass of matter which enters into his organism, there is a something which does not come from a combination of substances and chemical laws, and which on the contrary is the cause, the former of his organic unity.

Fifteenth.—However let us suppose it possible. Let us admit that in effect organic life may be explained by physics and pure chemistry; that it is necessary even to deny all difference between the mechanical, physical, and chemical functions of nature; that would not preclude the existence of a true anthropology—the anthropology which establishes its facts before it imagines its theories; that would not preclude the acknowledgment in man of a power which stands far above the blind movements of nature, far above even organic animal life; a power which it is impossible to trace back to the simple effect of matter in motion. I allude to the power which virtually exists in man, and developes gradually in him,—moral liberty, personal independence. I do not mean by liberty that which a superficial psychology has baptised with that name, free choice, of which indifference is the characteristic (*indifferentia ad velle et non velle*), a notion which all truly philosophic minds,—Locke and Spinoza, Leibnitz and Hegel,—have rejected as false. What I refer to is the moral power, in virtue of which man, rising above the fatalism of

nature, rules the natural inclinations and passions of his organic life, enters as a superior cause into the chain of blind causes, and has the power to modify, to put away, to subject to a moral and the natural course of physical and chemical laws. The animal has no moral faculty. The dog, for example, which remembers the pain he felt on being whipped for devouring the game his master had killed, may find in that recollection the cause which restrains the free application of his physical instinct, but that cause is really not in himself, it comes from without. In man exclusively the moral sense unfolds as a power of inner life which, independent of external circumstances (for example, the foresight of punishment) and in virtue of that internal moral necessity, which is nothing else than true liberty, makes him able to master his selfish inclinations, and then to trample on the most powerful of his instincts,—the love of life. The moral power of self-renunciation, the power of love, this it is which separates man by a great gulf from the plant and the animal. The latter necessarily and constantly revolve within themselves and live only during a time, fixed as that within which their physical forces continue. Man, on the contrary, in his moral development becomes always more and more capable of living for the good of others. This capability, by the fact of its existence, proves that there is in the world something more than that which the materialist calls matter and material laws. This is a force the cause of which must be sought in the essential difference which distinguishes man from the animal, and which, far from owing its existence to a combination of matter, does not indeed destroy the anterior laws of nature, with which man is connected by his physical being, but overrules matter, modifies its effects, and makes use of physical forces to attain a loftier aim. It is thus that experience shews us a magnificent ascent in the evolution of nature. It first presents to us

objects, like iron, the parts of which are mechanically held together according to the laws of attraction and cohesion. Then it conducts us to other substances, as water, which are formed by chemical combination, and thereby rise above a pure aggregate and above mere mechanism. Higher still stand the beings in which organic force realises effects superior to those of mechanism and chemistry. Finally, moral beings appear, beings whose personal will and independence dominate and modify anterior forces, the organic not excepted.

Sixteenth.—When materialism boasts of being able to explain not only the unity of organic life, but also that of consciousness, by the idea of a total or collective sensation of all the nervous impressions, it forgets, first, that every sensation supposes something else beside the sensation itself—namely, a sentient subject—a perception; to say nothing of all that is incomprehensible in the idea that the consciousness of self is a sensation, we may conclude that man, having a consciousness of himself, has no other sensation than that of his I, or me; that he is at the same time subject and object; and that thus the consciousness of self decidedly cannot be a nervous impression: second, that this reasoning ends in this absurdity, namely, that from a plurality of impressions comes the unity of consciousness, as if plurality could of itself resolve into unity.

Seventeenth.—The materialistic formula pretends that there is nothing but matter and the forces which are inherent in it. Every force, then, is a property of matter. But here materialism digs its own grave without knowing it. If by this is meant that all matter, even the smallest atom, has force for a property, we come to this consequence,—that there is no matter which is not at the same time force, and consequently that we have no means to distinguish between matter

and force. If by this on the contrary it is meant something which is added to matter, and that thus matter is something which of itself is without force, then we come to the notion of a formless, inert matter, the Greek *ἄλγ*. It follows that when we speak of matter in science, we make use of a word legitimatised by usage, but which owes its origin to a dualistic conception of things, according to which, speculators saw in matter the negation of force, and in force the negation of matter, the two being considered as distinct substances, the one by the side of the other. But this is a worn out conception, which no one at present would more categorically reject than the materialists themselves, who cry out so loudly against all idea of forces existing apart. Matter, then, is in reality only the tangible and visible side of nature, the side whose existence we can prove by our senses; though it may not be directly perceptible, as is the case, for instance, in imponderable ether. Matter is not something distinct from force, nor is it a thing possessing forces, but it is the form perceptible to our senses which reveals force; or, if you prefer the term, life. In other terms matter is the manifestation of force.

If we apply these principles to man: the body is the temporary form, the tangible and visible manifestation, the expression of man's self-developing life. If we apply them to the universe, matter is the side of it which is perceivable by our senses, the manifestation and the expression of the one and everlasting life of nature; in other terms the form which the Absolute Spirit takes. If materialism will remain faithful to its name, it must accept the nonsense of the *ἄλγ* that is of matter without form, that chimæra of the ancients. But as long as it persists in speaking of laws, of life, of forces, as properties of matter, of matter which has forces, it carries in itself an enemy which devours it.

If the axiom of materialism, "everything proceeds from the mixture of matter," is demonstrated false, materialists must renounce that disdain with which they treat the teleological conception of nature. By the right by which science rejects the notion of forces without and apart from matter, it forbids the explanation of natural phenomena, according to an end assumed *a priori*; this is to introduce a *Deus ex machina*, to cut the gordian knot, not to untie it; and this method gratuitously confounds the end and the cause. The science of nature has not to enquire after final causes; it does not ask the why, but seeks the forces and the laws which explain the causes of those phenomena. But this does not shut out the true idea of an end, object, or purpose. Every organic being is, in growing, destined to an end or object, toward which all his development gravitates. Here experience decidedly shows us an end, and not only so, but the means which nature, with an unfailing certainty, uses to attain that end. The development of nature takes place according to a plan, an idea which attains its complete realisation only in a perfect state of the several beings. In organic nature the living being is *causa sui*, the cause of himself. The means which he employs are not in his case as in the case of a machine, a watch, etc., ready prepared, and coming from somewhere else, it is he himself that forms them. That which is product and purpose in him, in turn becomes his means, while the means become the end. Each part exists as much by the whole, as the whole by each part. But this unity of plan and of end, nature reveals in the least as well as in the greatest things; in the regularity of crystalline formations, and of the mathematical laws presiding over the undulations of the luminous ether, as well as in the organisation of imperceptible molecules, and of the infusoria; in the development of the egg, as in the planetary system; in the

physical development and formation of the globe, as in the province of history, and the moral and social development of the human race. By taking his stand on this unity, this constant regularity of things, Cuvier, furnished with a fossil bone, reconstructed an unknown animal from top to toe, of which, afterward a specimen was found preserved entire, and entirely conformed to his predictions. By taking his stand on this unity, the astronomer, by his calculations, devined the existence of Neptune, and as well as his exact locality in space, the very locality where the planet was found by Galle. So in the moral kingdom; the prophet discerns in the germs of his age the ideal which will be realised in an age to come. Chance? arbitrary and blind necessity? nowhere. Everywhere law, order, harmony, development, the concurrence of physical, chemical, organic, moral forces, in the realisation of some end. The unity of the molecule, united to other molecules, forms the unity of the object. The unity of objects centres in the unity of species. Species, collected into the three great kingdoms of nature, continue by their development the unity of the geological development of the planet. This development, in its turn, forms part of the totality of the solar system; which, with its planets and their satellites, moves round a centre yet unknown. This internal centre, this concourse of each particular life which at once is its own end, and contributes to the supreme end, whose universal unity is the grand final end; this relation of each individual thing with the great whole—to attempt to explain all this without a central principle, an intelligence, a Creative Mind, directing the development of each object, so that never does the boundless multiplicity destroy the absolute unity—such an attempt would be as reasonable as to refer the appearance of a book, logically divided and composed, to the arbitrary and fortuitous concourse of millions of metal forms

called letters: as to refer a symphony to an indescribable number of instruments and instrumentalists playing independently one of another; as to refer a beautiful edifice to the mere accumulation of the logs of wood, bars of iron, and blocks of stone of which it consists. The argument, ancient as it is, becomes constantly more forcible in the degree in which successive generations know the universe better. Thus nature in proportion as it unrolls before our eyes its diverse aspects, gives us an accumulative revelation of the harmonious life of the world. The forces of nature lead us to the One Force which controuls all phenomena conformably to a plan, an idea. And what naturalists have been accustomed to call the eternal laws of nature, if we consider the true sense of that phrase, is the expression of God's thought. That thought human reason gradually becomes acquainted with; that thought it gradually systematises, and hence forms the true science of the universe.

The natural sciences, properly studied, far from excluding God from his works, and leaving to the religious man only the choice between blind faith and vague mysticism, conducts us in concert with all other sciences, to the Supreme Principle which sovereignly rules and governs the Great Whole; in other terms, it leads us to acknowledge God; God not separated from nature, which is the revelation of himself; but God who manifests his diviner life in the measureless abundance of innumerable individualities; God who is the life of all life, and in whom man, as a rational and moral being, lives and acts.

A cause of materialism not less important than the non-philosophic study of nature, consists in a defective psychology and a defective system of metaphysics.

The ancient psychology, still occupying the ground on which it was left by Plato and Descartes, spoke of the soul

as a separate substance, mechanically united to the body. It was thus admitted to be possible for the soul to exist independently of all bodily form, and this notion gave birth to a host of others more or less absurd—to spectral appearances, to demoniacal possessions, to the transmigration of souls, to the pre-existence of souls, to a state intermediate between death and the resurrection, to the false idea of the resurrection, which made it consist in an equally mechanical reunion of the soul with its former body. On the same ground the question was raised whether the soul existed before its connection with a carnal organism, or whether God created a soul for every new organism. With such a conception of man, any intimate bond between the soul, that is the essence of man, and the body, was inconceivable; and it was in vain that the old psychologists devised hypotheses to explain the mutual action of the body on the soul, and of the soul on the body—the *influxus physicus* (physical influx) the divinely regulated concomitance of the Cartesians, the occasionalism of Geulinx. Leibnitz himself, although a partisan of a dynamic conception of the universe, considered the soul as a monad which was united to the body—that is, to an aggregate of other monads—only by what he called “the pre-established harmony.”

Other hypotheses are such as could not justify themselves before the tribunal of experimental science. The resemblance of children to their parents, or their parents' parents, not solely as to their body, but also their aptitudes, character, faculties, visibly indicated that the entire man, and not only a part of the man, was virtually contained in the embryo. No wonder naturalists could not avoid rallying that psychology which passed its time in inquiring in what part of the body the soul was situate, or at what moment of the foetal life the soul entered the embryo. The question was considered as

important by legal medicine in order to fix the degree of criminality in the case of voluntary abortions, as well as by traditional theology, that it might determine if the foetus ought to be baptised before its birth.

This dualism of body and soul engendered the materialism of empirical anthropology. That science could not continue to divide man into two heterogeneous substances, and saw in him, as in all other beings, a unity developing itself organically. If metaphysics stipulated for the duality of spirit and matter, mechanically joined together, one or other of these consequences ensued of necessity :—the tendency of the natural sciences toward unity could not fail to destroy one of the factors, either by denying matter, and so producing the idealism of Berkeley ; or by affirming, in accordance with truth, that there are no forces separate from matter, and not the least trace of a substance united mechanically with an organism. All force then was referred to matter. The soul, already reduced by Locke to the condition of a sheet of white paper, and thereby reduced to nothing, was completely put aside, while all the high functions of human life were considered as so many attributes of matter. This result was arrived at in the notorious *Système de la Nature* of the Baron d' Holbach, and the same position was that of the French materialists, Helvetius, La Mettrie, and others. This too, is the position which is held by the materialists of the present hour. If the consequences of this tendency are sad and even terrible, we must avow that there where dualism prevails, science, by which dualism cannot be endured, must come to this extreme ; and that, according to the very just remark of M. J. H. Fichte,* materialism has its relative legitimacy in the presence of this duality. Kant, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, had previously demonstrated that the hypothesis of a unity, or separate sub-

* *Anthropologie*, 1856, p. 56 and 80 ; Compare Liebig's *Chemical Letters*, p.p. 206, 372, 373.

stance, which is called the soul, rested on a paralogism—in this way, that by abstraction, you detach from man himself, certain attributes of man, by which he is distinguished from other beings, and that this abstraction once effected, you have left in your hands not a man but *a thing*. A valuable remark made by the great chemist, Liebig, may confirm the general tenor of these words. “If we would not be unjust towards the apostles of materialism, we must allow that their ideas are only an exaggerated reaction against the doctrines which they found in vogue. The physiology of the philosophers of nature wanted that basis which is indispensable to all exact research, namely experience. All the phenomena of nutrition, of respiration, of motion, were with it, the simple effects of what is called the vital force. In the organic body, they said, physics and chemistry have nothing to do; the body produces iron as it disengages heat, that is, by its own motion. At present, a more exact study of nature has shown that all the forces of matter really take part in the organic developement; and the extreme reaction consists in maintaining, contrary to the anterior point of view, that chemical and physical forces are the sole causes of the phenomena of life, and that there are no others in living bodies. But as little as the philosopher of nature were able to prove that their vital force did all, so little have our materialists the power to prove that inorganic forces suffice to produce the human organism and the human mind. The truth lies midway. Rising above exclusive opinions, it acknowledges a formative principle, or an over-ruling idea, which co-operates with physical and chemical forces, making them contribute to its own end.”

In view of the doctrines thus explained, recent philosophy recognised the duty of conceiving of man as a unit, as a superior unit, rising above the opposition of a soul and a body, not to sacrifice one of the two to the other, but in the intention of attacking the dualism in its last retrenchments, and

overcoming it. The monadism to which science is accordingly led may be expressed in this formula:—The soul is the essence of man, his identity which lives on through the successions of matter and thought, and is from the first development of the germ in the matrix, destined to become, through a series of evolutions, that which it is according to its idea, a conscious and independent person. This essence, considered as a unity, is the base of all the vital functions, the directing principle of the entire development, and, as we have seen, cannot be deduced from matter and its combinations; but finding its materials in the matter around it, gives itself a form. From matter it draws the organs which are necessary to it in order to attain its destiny, which is to be a rational being. By means of those organs it thinks, and by them also appropriates the invisible truths, the ideas which are reflected in objective nature. As every organism indicates in its origin a unity of plan and of principle, a power which gradually realises itself, conformably to a constant directing idea; the germ from its first appearance virtually contains the entire man, as well in his carnal relations as in his spiritual. The human person, like the animal, begins in the state of pure nature, but that which then distinguishes it from other beings of this class, is the virtual power of the highest moral and spiritual development. Man is not distinguished from a plant or an animal in being a duality, whilst they are a unity, but in this, namely, that his essence, his individuality, holds a superior rank, a specifically different rank, in the scale of being. The plant and animal assimilate simply what they need for their organic development; man, in addition, has the capacity (by means of organs which the animal either has not or has only in an imperfect state, and the presence of which in man comes from his original and essential difference from the animal) man, we say, has the power of appropriating

invisible truth, or the ideas expressed by visible reality. It is thus that he can recognise objective beauty, the order and wisdom which reigns in the universe; it is thus that he unfolds as a rational and moral being, strong enough by his moral will to keep down the physical and animal life which is in and around him. The true side of materialism is the experimental truth that there is no force independent of matter, that is to say, of the form or sensuous envelope which is the manifestation of force. Spiritual force itself is not independent of the body; and the mind, separated from matter, thus understood, would be only an empty abstraction. The power of materialism consists in the war which it has declared against the dualism that denies the unity of the human being. On the other side, its error lies in seeking the foundation of that unity in a collection of different things—in the combination of chemical substances found by analysis in the body, and the concurrence of the physical laws of cohesion, light, heat, electricity. On the contrary, in this finality, in this concurrence of so many diverse things converging to one end, it ought to see the proof of the substantial unity which is the original factor of all the functions, bodily and mental, of human life.

A fear deduced from this view of the oneness of human nature, of having to abandon a belief in immortality, still procures for the dualistic view many adherents. To this, I reply, that if the belief in immortality is founded on a purely abstract hypothesis having no support in reality, such a position would be the opposite of a proof in its favour.—This reasoning,—Immortality is certain, therefore you must admit the dualism of the body and the soul—is lame, and cannot hold itself up before experimental science. The true conclusion would rather be this:—If the belief in immortality cannot maintain itself except by admitting the dualism of the body and the soul, as such dualism is unsustainable, that belief must fall.

But by no means does the admission of man's oneness involve the forfeiture of our assurance of immortality. That faith does not depend on the relations of the body and the soul, but on the essential nature of man. The being whom we call man, is he or is he not restricted in his development by the limits of his earthly life? The question comes to this, does the development of man, as a moral being, contain indications of his surviving the dissolution of his animal organism? The reply must be in the affirmative. In truth, in man's moral nature there dwells a law superior to every law of animal organisation. This law makes it obligatory on him, and, in the higher regions of the moral world, determines him to renounce himself, to renounce his sensual and selfish inclinations, in favour of a general interest, overtopping his own. The existence of such a law is quite as well founded on experience as that of the mechanical, chemical, and organic laws. This law of self-renunciation, imposed on man alone, is a phenomenon which, deviating from all else in nature, would be inexplicable, were it not in relation with another law, equally well ascertained in the moral world. That other is that self-renunciation marks the development of our being in view of a superior perfection. Nature, which obliges man to renounce himself, justifies the obligation by shewing us in it, and in the moral necessity which characterises it, the tendency of man to rise above physical necessity, and to bring forth the spiritual life victorious over the thousand enslaving complications of the natural life. If renunciation is development, we must add that the duty is not limited to the privation of all sensuous enjoyment when a superior interest demands it, but that it goes so far as to exact a sacrifice of the whole man himself. The law of renunciation is often nothing short of the duty of surrendering life. It is thus that the most

noble of our race, obeying this moral impulse, have sacrificed themselves for the truth, for the realisation of a great idea, for their country, for humanity. It is thus that Jesus died. Our moral nature teaches us to acknowledge the obligation imposed on man of giving up his life, when duty requires it, and shows us that there is in us all a force which, well developed, puts us in a condition to accomplish that supreme obligation. Either nature is not faithful to herself, or the highest act of renunciation coincides with the law of development. In other terms, in the moral obligation of incurring death there is an indication that death is the development and not the annihilation of life. Were death the suppression of life, then would result the inexplicable phenomenon, that nature which secures to each being, the duration contained in his original aptitude, imposes annihilation on superior beings, and that in order to realise this highest development. It is thus that our moral life carries with it the proof that death, or the dissolution of the body, is by no means the dissolution of our being.

We might speak of other indications of the same truth. Thus we might insist on the permanent struggle which the moral principle in us, has to sustain against the sensual a struggle which, never during our present life, even with the best, ends in absolute triumph. We might speak also of the disproportion which exists between the external condition of man, and his moral development; that also indicates a future in which life is not traversed by misfortune and suffering. But we limit ourselves to the confuting of an objection often advanced against faith in immortality.

Nature discloses a tendency to individualise itself. We see it in that infinite number of individuals in which general nature becomes particular. But this individualisation, in the animal and in the plant, is but temporary. The individual, vegetable

or animal, ceases to exist at the end of a certain time, and re-enters into the generality of things. Will it not be the same with man? Permanent duration, immortality, are they not in man's case attributes of the species? Does not the species periodically absorb the individuals of which it is composed? We answer: if the remark is true of animals and plants, it proves merely that with them the tendency of nature to individuality is not yet revealed in all its potency. We already see a tendency to individualisation, but not the real individuality. Besides, experience instructs us that in those two provinces the tendency of nature does not realise itself with the same force. It is evidently much less complete in plants, and in those animals of which you may indefinitely obtain specimens by mere vivisection, without needing either a grain or an egg. It is on the contrary more complete in those plants and those animals of a higher kind, which cannot be re-produced by such a division of the individual. Moreover, among the superior animals themselves, as we learn from the difference of their normal duration, individualisation is unequal, and nowhere is perfect enough to resist eventually the absorbing form of nature. Individuality is real, only in the case in which the individual is not solely a temporary appearance of the general life, but is an individual in the true sense, that is to say in the permanent sense of the word, able to maintain its individuality against the generalising power. It is in such an individual that nature realises its tendency to individualisation, and this tendency of nature, everywhere visible, but always incomplete in the physical world, gives us a right to presume that above this physical world it reaches its end, and so becomes perfect. This realisation takes place in man. This is proved by his self-consciousness, and the personal independence to which he comes in virtue of his normal development. If the plant and the animal are able for some time to main-

tain themselves against general nature, although destined sooner or later to fall before its superior power, in man, on the contrary, the individual, as a moral being, tends to personality, to the emancipation of the spiritual life from physical servitude. Contemplating the difference in this respect between the plant and the animal, we see a development, the result of which is that the mind, peculiar to man, already in this life struggling against physical nature, does not, like purely organic life, succumb to the absorbing influence of general nature, but goes on continually unfolding more and more, acquiring a strength of individuality, constantly fuller and higher, and which it finally maintains and keeps, notwithstanding all the force exerted by its opponent. The attentive observer of human nature cannot question that man, as a moral being, tends to individuality in the loftiest sense of the word. His destiny is to become an individual in this sense, namely, that he is finally emancipated from the destructive power of physical nature. This is his goal; to this all his struggles converge, all his development; and the realisation of this in full, which is impossible in this life, is reserved to that ulterior period of his being, of which the tendency itself is a guarantee. The very idea of individuality supposes that the individual, in the complete sense of the word, is not a temporary phenomenon, a transient specimen of his species. To say that man is distinguished from the animal in being an I, that is, a conscious and independent person, an individual in the higher sense of the word, is to say that man is immortal.

If now our belief in immortality reposes on solid grounds, if our moral nature and our personality are its guarantee, it clearly is very different from that thing-soul (the soul considered merely as a thing), that abstract *thing-soul* which not merely materialism, but also Kant and the best psychologists of the day, Canus, J. H. Fichte, Roorda, &c., have with

reason disallowed. The question is simply to learn if the human race carries in its development marks of permanence. Should it prove necessary to consider man as an agglomeration of material substances, or, if the phrase is preferred, of physical and chemical laws and effects, then we must conclude that his individual existence will end with the dissolution of those, his constituent elements. But if man is one, properly one, then is it possible that the being who, notwithstanding the continual change of the matter which composes his body, still maintains his identity, commences a new period of life when the organism appropriated to his terrestrial activity, falls to pieces in death. It is possible that the vital principle which takes an earthly organism from the materials and the physico-chemical laws by which it is surrounded, takes a higher organism at the moment of death, in a manner which escapes our perception. Perhaps, as many of our present naturalists suppose, it finds the substance out of which it weaves its new investment, in that universal ether which exists everywhere and pervades all things, although perfectly invisible and imponderable.* Perhaps, even in this life, it unconsciously profits by that substance to prepare withal the condition of its higher perfection. I know that I am now speaking of a simple hypothesis, or probability; but it must be remembered that belief in immortality does not rest exclusively on this view, and that this or any other hypothesis, ought not to be proposed until the belief itself has been established on the solid foundations which are furnished by our nature.

Anthropological dualism has been one cause of materialism. It has led materialists to reject the soul, considered as a thing, as well as its immortality. The same dualism lies at the

*Sears, in his interesting and instructive "*Foregleams of Immortality*," (SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & Co., LONDON) has valuable remarks running in this tenor.—*Translator*.

root of their denial of God. The first effect of philosophy to explain the universe was purely naturalistic, only afterwards did man come to see that nature involves something in addition to matter. Then in Anaxagoras philosophy rose to the idea of a Rational Principle, so explaining the order and the harmony of the world. Plato taught his brilliant theory of ideas as the formers of matter. But the abstraction which produced the dualism of soul and body, produced with him the separation of matter and its forming powers, namely, the *nous* (*νοῦς*) or mind, and placed the divinity outside inanimate matter. This dualism passed into modern philosophy, even after the theory of matter being formless, already condemned by Aristotle, had disappeared before the verdict of the natural sciences, then having reached greater precision. Speculators continued to represent God as a being who, existing abstractly by himself, created the world in time; then, that once done, gives his creation up to itself, as a workman leaves the piece of mechanism he has made to work according to its forces; at most they accorded to him the right of introducing, when desirable, his omnipotent hand into its ordinary operations. Such was the idea of God, truly a *Déus ex machina*, a divinity reserved to untie or cut the knot:—such was the idea of God, of which philosophy made use to explain the existence of the world. Accordingly materialism came forward and, taking its stand on scientific experience, declared that the life in nature could not have a cause acting mechanically from without; but that all must be explained by the eternal properties and laws of matter. If the ancient metaphysics explained nature according to an end or a plan anteriorly formed, and for that supposed a thinking being, existing on the outside of matter, existing independently of matter, “The System of Nature” saw in the universe not the work but the workman. Nature, it said, is an infinite workshop, provided with all possible

materials; a power which itself produces the instruments and the means of which it makes use; and to this it is that the answer of Lalande refers—"I have certainly found in the heavens eternal laws, but I have not found God." All this was the consequence of a system of metaphysics which, separating spirit and nature, force and matter, idea and form (which in reality are always one), was the cause why men tossed mind overboard as a superfluous factor, as something of which the natural sciences had no need.

To defective metaphysics Kant's criticism has put an end. He saw how unsustainable were the metaphysical proofs commonly advanced in behalf of the existence of God, and he prepared the way for a juster notion of the Divine Being. According to this conception nature is not the work of God in the sense in which a table is the work of a joiner (as a Dutch theologian taught), or as a watch is the work of a watchmaker (as Rousseau affirmed), but it is the revelation of the one unique Infinite Being, who acts in fixed laws which the human mind becomes acquainted with and systematises; who manifests himself to our reason as the Supreme Reason; who specially manifests himself in the moral world as Holy Love; who, without being abstractedly separated from nature and man, lives and acts in nature and man, in ten thousand indefinitely diverse manners; and at the same time, superior to the continual ebb and flow of finite forms, the Absolute Mind, the self-conscious and supreme personality, is all in all.

Viewed from this position, law is but the expression of the divine life and activity; matter, the visible form of that life; the human body, the organ by which man develops and rises to personal independence; and belief in immortality is the prediction of a future; a prediction of that future which, placed beyond the boundary of the present life, is guaranteed by the experimental life of man as a thinking, reasonable and moral being.

It remains for me to call attention to a third circumstance which one cannot pass in silence when one speaks of the causes of modern materialism, I mean the curtailment and even annihilation of the free development of the mind, crushed under the weight of dogmatic supernaturalism, and obliged to submit blindly to formularies fixed once, for all persons and all times. The dogma of the church, originally the expression of a religious idea, or of a philosophical speculation, gradually became petrified in ecclesiastical tradition, and was imposed on the mind as a power superior to reason and conscience. Then imperceptibly men grew accustomed to consider divine truth, supernatural in itself and in its origin, as lying beyond the field of human science. If the divine could be recognised in a human manner, that could take place only supernaturally, and, therefore, divinely. Faith, in consequence, abstained from seeking to comprehend and became itself a supernatural gift. Thus a divorce took place between faith and science, and the power of religion was made to consist in its right to hold reason captive, under the domination of the doctrine of the Church. Dogma became mystery; the criterion of truth, revealed by God, was found in its antagonism to human reason. Making a misuse of an incorrectly understood text, the doctors called this preferring the folly of God to human wisdom. All this was pregnant with consequences. If religion is anti-human, religious duty, understood in the highest sense, is to suppress whatever is human. Hence asceticism, the life of the cloister, and even the imbruting of our moral and rational sense,—all for the glory of God. The extreme point of this direction is the total annihilation of the subject, or, as the principal requirement of Jesuitism expresses it, the Christian must, for the glory of God, account himself as a mere corpse *perinde ac cadaver*.

What wonder if Bayle, in face of such a theology, placed

the peculiar character of the ecclesiastical doctrine in absurdity, and with bitter irony accused of treason those theologians whom philosophy conquered in part, by telling them that they introduced into the sanctuary the enemy which would one day give them their death blow. "Choose," said he, confounding Christianity with the tradition of the Church, "Choose, O theologians, either philosophy or the gospel. Would you understand what you profess, leave Christianity and be philosophers; would you be Christians, cease to examine, abandon philosophy and believe." What wonder if in countries where such a point of view held exclusive sway, free development being shackled and individual thought considered as false and dangerous, all care for spiritual things was abandoned to the Church and its functionaries? The believer soon became a practical materialist, and on his side the philosopher, in his first efforts to gain emancipation, disowned every thing that is spiritual and divine, and fell into theoretical materialism. Just as the earliest efforts of Greek philosophy, asserting the right of the mind against the despotism of traditional opinions, had for its result materialism, and the immoral cavils of the sophists, before Socrates succeeded in submitting the individual, disembarassed of tradition, to the authority of truth as recognised by reason. Thus in France the enslavement of the mind to the Church and the state produced the revolution with its excesses and follies, the destruction of all the foundations of religion and government, and, still in our own days, that socialism which is often nothing else than the grossest materialistic selfishness. There where mental liberty has been suppressed, the abolition of slavery is not sufficient to give birth to the true life, and individuals, to whom the things of the spirit are mere superficialities, or irrational dogmas, become materialists in theory when they reject that outward authority; just as the blind servants of the Church who sub-

ject their reason and conscience to its dogma, becomes in spite of their pretended orthodoxy, materialists in practice.

I have endeavoured to set forth the causes which in my judgment have occasioned the appearance of modern materialism. With a knowledge of the causes one may indicate the remedies. Materialism, the fruit of a superficial, and unphilosophic study of nature; of a defective psychology and system of metaphysics; as well as of the despotism of dogma over mind, must be overcome, first, by a deep and philosophical study of nature. The naturalist who believes in God only on the authority of the Church, or of his religious wants, but who in his own science cannot get beyond materialism, falls inevitably into the abyss, as soon as his insufficient supports are taken away. When the science of nature is acquired without philosophy and without any regard to metaphysics, it becomes materialistic, and he who professes it is a materialist in this domain of science, even when on a traditional basis the historical reality of which cannot be substantiated, he has recourse to supernatural hypotheses, condemned long since by another branch of human science. When R. Wagner affirms that science teaches nothing respecting the soul he is a materialist, and the advice he gives to others, namely, that they should believe, in spite of science, that God created the world and that the soul is immortal, will never be followed by those who in spiritual matters desire something more than the woman's reason "It is so because it is so," or the famous *credo quia absurdum, I believe it because it is absurd*. Whoever has not an interior and personal faith in supra-sensible realities, in whose eyes mind is something external, which expresses itself in formulas and dogmas, having no foundation in man himself, he is a materialist in science, and as soon as his supernatural basis gives way under him, he becomes a materialist in practice. The Pharisee, whose faith rested exclusively on tradition, is

not less a materialist than the Sadducee by whom tradition is rejected; neither of them possesses that higher life of the spirit which raises man above material nature. On the other hand, metaphysics must have done with abstract speculation. The speculative philosopher, as much removed from an exclusive empiricism, as from that playing with *a priori* ideas, with which some despising realities have too long amused themselves, ought to make it his task to comprehend the real, such as it presents itself to our internal and external perception in nature and in humanity, and to find in reality, thus understood at the present moment, the germ of future reality, toward which present reality tends as toward its supreme ideal. The supra-naturalistic point of view, with its hollow notions, which the Reformation itself has not wholly driven away, and which is untenable on all points, must be replaced by a pure religion which, like Christianity, does not chain the human mind to formulas, but emancipates the spirit by the development of the interior life, and raises it to true independence. Christianity is not a dogma, nor an aggregate of dogmas; it is a power of the inner life which, raising man above the sphere of finite objects, enables him to comprehend the realities which are not seen with our bodily eyes.

Christianity is neither supernatural, nor superhuman. It is the highest point of the development of human nature itself, and, in this sense it is natural and human in the highest and noblest acceptation of those terms. Christianity is not a mystery if by mystery is meant something incomprehensible. According to the Lord Jesus and his apostle Paul it is a mystery only for the man in whom the religious life is not yet sufficiently developed for him to estimate the Gospel at its true value; and to know by experience that it is the most precious treasure of our race.

In itself, Christianity is the realisation of the true religion

in the life and sublime person of its founder, and through him, in human kind. This is a fact which it is the office of history to elevate to the height of a revelation of the Divine Wisdom ; a fact which resolves the enigmas of the government of the world by God, and which opens men's eyes, more than all abstract arguments, to the mysteries which envelope the grave. For a philosopher to pass by such a fact as Christianity, is to rob himself of the most important chapter in the great book of revelation presented by the moral world. On the other side, the mission of science is to put man into a condition to comprehend that divine volume, and to contemplate in nature and in history the inexhaustible riches of the divine wisdom. Before a Christianity such as this, which in the person of its founder overcame the world on the cross, materialism will never maintain itself long, and nevertheless it must be acknowledged that, in the ways of Providence, it has been the necessary reaction against baneful errors and prejudices. Thus even materialism has, after its manner, served the cause of everlasting truth.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE RECONCILED ON THE GROUND OF HISTORY.

BY ALBERT REVILLE, D.D.

I write in the hope of contributing my share to a new kind of scientific literature, the actual development of which in France ought to be encouraged as much as possible. A new kind, I have said, especially in this country, where until lately singular indifferences has prevailed in regard to religious science. This was in a great measure owing to the fact that religion hardly any longer occupied a place in our national life; in fact also to incorrect but very generally diffused ideas as to the true nature of religious matters. Some were not willing to handle them, others dared not. Probably we owe it to certain events that those who had the will have now also the courage, and that those who had the courage have now also the will, to submit to a serious examination religion, that flower of human life, without which all the rest is colourless, and as if struck with death. But when we have once entered on this course we must not rest satisfied with simple literary distractions. The religious education of the great body of the public has to be gone over again, and it is only long studies, studies which often run contrary to deeply-rooted prejudices, that can supply all that is needed. When, for instance, you reflect that nothing is so little known in France of the nineteenth century, as pure

Christianity ; such, I mean, as it was when it came forth from the mind of Jesus Christ, you will not be disposed to charge such a statement with exaggeration.

Doubtless religion in itself is not an affair of knowledge and intelligence. The unlearned adore as well as the learned, and often better. But that truth, so often alleged by ignorant or timid persons, in order to dispense with religious studies, does not prevent there being an intellectual condition, in which the weak sides of traditional religions become no longer sustainable. Nor does it prevent the fact that in our age, poor in exceptional geniuses, but rich in general instruction, what is called the enlightened class has become very numerous ; that this enlightened class may find less and less satisfaction in the ecclesiastical doctrines ; that its estrangement from religion is a very perilous trial, and a huge stumbling block in the way of the simple-minded. Moreover, the enlightened class are not a caste ; by insensible steps it passes into the inferior classes, and by its means chiefly improvement as well as perversion filtrates down into the humblest ranks of society. What a happy day for France will that be in which the enlightened class of our country shall again become religious, knowing why they ought to adore, and what they ought to adore.

Assuredly there is very little proportion between such a miracle and my writings. All my ambition is to prove to my readers that on the ground to which I invite them there is something to be learnt, and something to be done, and that the trouble is rewarded by the charm which belongs to studies having for their object human life in its most mysterious, as well as august and intricate, relations. I should be glad to think that here and there I had been able to contribute to bring into bud some of the germs which, still hidden under ground, will form the future harvest ; to kindle and feed the

fire of research in some souls, in which the sacred fermentation is already begun ; in a word, to persuade some of my fellow-countrymen of the truth of that old and deep averment, that "man lives not exclusively by what he eats."

What strikes my mind first and most is the moral conflict in which the present generation is engaged, and which, under a multitude of different forms, may issue in the antagonism of religion and science. Not small is the number of those who reject the former in the name of the latter, or, at least, if it is rare that the preference granted to one of those elements of spiritual life, reaches to the absolute proscription of the other, (for indeed it is difficult entirely to deny what corresponds to an essential want of our nature), yet the ground conceded to science by many religious men, and, on the other hand, what many philosophers leave to religion, is, on either side, reduced to so little that we may assert as a fact the existence of the antagonism to which we have alluded.

The antagonism of science and religion cannot have a foundation in right, since there would hence ensue a sunderance of human nature, which is essentially one. But it is easy to understand why it may, in fact, be real and actual. The causes now at work in this direction have formerly produced the same result. Let us first form a faint idea of the two terms, in order that we may correctly apprehend their relations.

Religion, in its most general sense, is a faculty natural to man, by which he tends to unite himself as a whole—will, heart, imagination, intelligence—to that which reveals itself to him as The Absolute. Science is the progressive knowledge of objects, and of their mutual relations.

Religion, since it is a spontaneous tendency, proceeds by intuition ; science, since it is a methodical research, proceeds by reflexion. The former specially needs the ideal ; the latter,

the real. In that, sentiment predominates; in this, reason. The first may be possessed by children; the second supposes the maturity of intelligence. The great transformations, and the great steps to religion, are made by exceptional geniuses who rise in human kind, and who, pronouncing with a loud and intelligible voice the word which the multitude scarcely lisps, draw around themselves ordinary minds by the force of moral affinity more than by the force of demonstration. The progress of science on the contrary is gained by comparison, by meditation, by minute and cautious research. In other words, while science advances by the labour of disciplined minds, who set no step onward without first giving to themselves an account of what they have done, and what they wish to do; religion comes forth from inspired minds, who seize at once a higher truth, which masters them to such an extent as to prompt their words and mould their lives. This distinction is indeed not absolute. There are also scientific geniuses, and a kind of inspiration in some discoveries, as those of Columbus and Newton in modern times, and of Archimedes in antiquity. But it is not the less true that the philosopher does not forthwith surrender to the inspirations of his genius, which both for him and others remain as pure hypothesis, as long as they are not confirmed by experience. On the contrary, the prophet—we take the word in its widest acceptation—abandons himself to the inspiration that opens his eyes to a radiant truth, which he feels no need of submitting to an experimental verification; nor does even the thought of so doing occur to him. Religious inspiration is nothing but an extraordinary kindling of the divine spirit inherent in human nature, and which, latent or at least suppressed in each of us, in some choice spirits pierces through its material enclosures, and darts toward the infinite, to fall back again in rain which fecundates the human race. From that time our species

gradually rises towards the height held by the revealers. The sound which they utter so powerfully, makes corresponding cords vibrate in their fellow men. We draw our life from the life of the prophets. Here, however, we are near the moment of conflict as between religion and science.

Revealers precede others in their perception of higher spiritual realities, a knowledge of which brings man near the absolute; but not in a scientific acquaintance with objects. In consequence, the form or expression they give to their revelations necessarily partake of that intellectual imperfection. But as the generation in the midst of which they live cannot, any more than themselves, be aware of this inequality of the form as compared with what it ought to express, it ensues, that for them also the form and the substance possess the same degree of evidence. If for example, the sentiment of a future retribution shines forth in the human soul, many generations will pass, before a person surmises all that is erroneous in the representation of heaven as a solid vault, and of hell as a subterranean cavern, which were so long connected in all minds with that sacred belief. The same remark may be applied to all traditional religious doctrines.

What is the consequence? This period of scientific progress and independent reflexion are always marked by a reciprocal severance of enlightened thought and religious tradition. And not only so; but the mind has so long been habituated to identify the form and the substance of anterior revelations, that, revolted by the form, it rejects the substance also. Breaking with religious traditions, it passes on to break with religion itself. You would say that the more instructed it is, the less it is religious. On their side, the masses, who possess not the intellectual development sufficient to make them aware of the increasing conflict that exists between science and tradition, remain attached to the latter, consider it identical

with what it contains, and charge with irreligion those who call it in question. Besides tradition is a great power in religion. As religious truth must be eternal, the simple-minded do not readily allow that the knowledge of that truth may be new or recent. As the ignorant see the infinite there, where the philosopher sees only an imposing grandeur; as for instance, a primitive tribe may adore the sea, the mountain, the ample river, which seems to them boundless; so a doctrine which presents itself to the uncultured, with the recommendations of hoary tradition, produces on them the impression of having been admitted by all, everywhere, and in every age. Is not this the constant pretensions of old religions, when they fight against the invasions of a new religion? This need of connection with antiquity is so strong that new religions, in their turn, always find the means of ascribing to themselves an origin anterior to that of the edifice which they desire to overturn. The history of religion is full of examples. Still more; it must also be said that in the moment of struggle men, really enlightened, but in whom our spiritual wants and sentiments are very strong, fascinated by that venerable religious character which time stamps on old doctrines, as on old walls, consider it a duty to suppress in themselves, and to proscribe with others, the inconvenient requirements of science. Let us try to understand the natural progress of these things, and let us cease to hurl at each other's heads those charges of spiritual pride or of hypocrisy, which have no solid foundation. There may be sincerity on both sides.

I think I have in what precedes described the theoretical conditions of our present religious situation.

To speak at the same time of science and of religion is, in the opinion of many, to speak of a profound antagonism. To

pretend to conciliate the two is, in their idea, either to fall into an innocent illusion, or to lay a snare for the partisans of one of the two powers, with a view to advantage the other. "No," say thousands of voices at this moment, "revelation and reason, science and faith, are opposed as much as day and night. They, when occasionally they meet, exchange polite salutations, but it is affected politeness, pure diplomacy. At the bottom they detest each other; each in secret hopes for the annihilation of its rival, and even declares so when the opportunity serves."

As long as men confound religion itself with any religious tradition, this conflict will be irremediable. On the one side the friends of religion will grant to science the right to live only on condition of submitting to the decrees of authority which they adopt, and evidently science would sign its own deposition, and its sentence of death, if it accepted such a treaty of peace. How gilded soever the cage, wings are utterly useless to the bird which it imprisons. On the other side, men of science will see in religion, thus compromised, at most a means for keeping the lower classes in order. In their judgment, religion ought to withdraw by little and little, in the degree in which, intelligence spreading, the masses may substitute for their traditional beliefs abstract principles and logical rules of conduct. And they are surprised that religion cannot accept that inferior part which their disdain consents to leave to it provisionally! They do not see that religion must reign or perish!

What is to be done? For in truth man is naturally a religious being, and the deprivation of religion is always accompanied by moral suffering. Christianity, to us the final and perfect religion, resolves to live. It is a dream, the emptiest of fancies, to suppose that a new religion can ever come forth from philosophy. On the other side, man is

capable of knowledge, ought to acquire knowledge, is resolved to possess knowledge. He is gifted with reason—it is that he may make use of it. He has a conscience—it is that he may prefer and pursue the right, the good, the true. He feels himself responsible—it is that he may own the duty of subscribing only to what rests on a solid foundation. In the spiritual life, as in the commercial life, it is always a fault to put your hand to a document before you have read and approved it.

Certain persons, taking credit to themselves for liberal ideas, while the most liberal thing they possess is, perhaps, their conscience, have devised a very simple method of getting themselves out of the dilemma. They divide their brain into two compartments, lodge in the one religious tradition, modern science in the other; and draw by turn from the two, that which suits the circumstance of the hour and place in which they find themselves. They do as was done by a certain Italian priest, whose curious history I have somewhere read. He was a learned personage. In his house he had built and furnished two studies. The one he loaded with the most orthodox books that can be conceived. There you saw only fathers of the church, canonists, pontifical decrees, acts of councils, annalists like Baronius, controversialists like Bellarmine, political writers like Donoso Cortès, etc. In the other, all the free thinkers, from Plato to Voltaire and Kant—an excellent selection of literary and scientific works, presented a complete arsenal of independent reason. The proprietor, who discharged certain canonical duties in the Court of Rome, was also a member of many profane, learned academies. If he had to draw up a document bearing on his ecclesiastical functions, he shut himself up in his Catholic, Apostolic and Roman study, and then his pen, inspired by the *genius loci*, or atmosphere of the place, traced lines which were of imma-

culate orthodoxy. That done ; he proceeded into the other study, and there gave himself up to literary and scientific labours, the boldness of which was the delight of the philosophic societies of which, happily for them, he was an industrious member. When you came to consult him, he asked you in the lobby what was your business, and led you into the study on the right side, or the study on the left side, according to the nature of the wished-for consultation ; and even if the questions put to him during the interview were of a different kind, he, before giving a reply, begged you to pass into the room corresponding with the nature of your inquiry. This truly was a refined sort of playing at truth, but was it as moral as original ?

The simple truth is, that which has to be done here is not to discover some method of self-extrication. Learned or ignorant, we all stand before the same sovereign tribunal ; to which science and faith must alike submit, namely, conscience. Now conscience pronounces this division of the soul criminal. The same man says successively, "yes," and "no," to the same thing. If one affirmation is true, the other is false. His moral is that of the bat, in La Fontaine's fable.

I am a bird, for here are my wings ;

I am a bat, and woe to the rats !

The fabulist makes his animal the type of the sage. So much the worse for his judgment if he spoke seriously—any way, his sage is not an honest man. In reality, he deserves the epithet, learned as little as that of religious. Had he had the sacred fire of either science or faith, he would not have been able to endure such separation, and would have given himself entire to either the one or the other.

I am well aware that sometimes this dualism, which exists as a fact between religion and science, is raised to the altitude of a philosophical theory. If we believe some writers, the

contradiction not only exists, but ought to exist. To attempt to reconcile the two is impossible and useless, because it would be to deny what must be. It may well happen that a thing philosophically true, is religiously false; and reciprocally. What need we reply, except that, even admitting this point of view, which becomes ludicrous the moment you apply it, the state of mind which it supposes is intolerable for those who take religion and science, or only one of the two, in earnest? At present it hardly need be remarked, that we do not confound this theoretical dualism with the involuntary dualism in which those are engaged who feel the painful conflict of these two tendencies of our nature, and as yet know not how to bring them into harmony. It is to these persons that we address ourselves in the hope of indicating to them the true solution of the problem.

Others again understand quite differently the position of these two rival powers, and it is among religious men that we find this new category. With them the traditional religious doctrines are absolutely true. At present science and philosophy contradict them on certain points. Well, science and philosophy are in the wrong. Let science and philosophy carry their researches further; let them study nature, man, and history better and more impartially; and very certainly they will end by rendering homage to truths which they have denied. Even already, they assert, religion has derived results from certain discoveries, and registered several avowals of secular wisdom. The haughty pagan has been more than once compelled to take her seat on the stool of repentance.

This point of view has its true side. There is no scholar worthy of the name, who does not now acknowledge that, especially in the eighteenth century, science directed against religious tradition objections which prove simply that she was advanced little beyond pupilage. But since that period

there have been minds eager to collect the contradictions which she was forced to address to herself, and who thought that science was about to become orthodox again. There exists a literature of no small extent, especially in England, in which ingenuity is exercised in finding in the Bible all our modern sciences. Some discover our geology in the first chapter of Genesis. Others, with ample forces from ethnographical and physiological erudition, strive to prove that the human race necessarily descended from one couple. The universal deluge, the confusion of languages, the miracles of the Exodus, are objects of elaborate demonstrations. The authenticity, such as tradition makes it, of the books of the Bible, is defended, *a priori*, with a simplicity and a zeal truly deserving better results. You can have no idea of the arbitrariness, of the violence, of the proceedings in vogue in this special literature. It is evident that the unbelievers who have been brought back to religion (if any have been) by such kinds of defence, experienced, anteriorly, very vivid religious wants, and only lacked an excuse for surrendering. A book of this kind, extensively diffused in France, is that of Cardinal Wiseman, on "*The Relations of Science and Religion.*" Theologians may judge of the logical value of such demonstrations by reading the last part of the work, where the writer undertakes to prove that another modern science, namely, sacred criticism, has marvellously confirmed the superiority of the text of the Vulgate. The fact is that an ordinary reader may easily allow himself to be taken by the Cardinal's dexterity. Judge then of the real force of the argument borrowed on other points from the developments of geology and the historical sciences. But what surpasses my comprehension still more is the assurance with which those defenders of the faith rest on science. How is it then, they do not see that in the case of science pronouncing their con-

demnation, they, by the nature of their defence, have surrendered the right to appeal against the the sentence? Either independent science has no right as against tradition: then why make its results into a possible weapon of offence? or, that tradition may receive from science a mortal blow: then the faith of the simple minded depends for the future on that science which, whatever may be said, has become generally more religious, but not more orthodox. Let there be here no misunderstanding. To make use of the sciences as Caria- tides to support the sanctuary, is by implication to avow that, if they refused their service, the sanctuary would fall on its wor- shippers. Besides those books themselves suppose a singular transformation of ideas. You cannot in their perusal help suspecting that their authors believe in the reality of science rather than of religion. While in former times they brought science before the bar of the Bible and of religion, in these times, the Bible and the Church are put on their defence at the bar of science, and are glad enough to be pronounced "not guilty." Alas! is this the assurance which belongs to, which befits, religion? The English tourist, who brings home an inscription copied in the ruins of Egypt or of Asia, has the power to shake my faith! It is possible that the artesian well, which they are now digging, may have an heretical odour! A spear from an Aztec may deal a blow fatal to revelation!

Is the situation better for doctrines of a metaphysical description, such as the trinity, the incarnation, original sin? There have not in our age been wanting religious writers who have endeavoured to reconcile their actions with modern reason by means of speculative constructions, which always require to be put into new forms, because they regularly break in pieces and fall on the good nature by which they are dictated. The history of the formation of those doctrines has taken from

them the prestige which they owed to the idea of their necessary connexion with Christianity. From that moment the absolute contradiction which the doctrines contain became sensible, even to very religious minds. Accordingly it is very natural not to yield without distrust to those so-called philosophic demonstrations, in which the place of arrival being always indicated before hand, there is always reason to fear that the road along which you are conducted may be smooth and direct in appearance only. The experience of late years has sufficiently proved that such distrust was not without reason. Who does not remember the illusions which were engendered by Hegelianism under its first form? It would without the least scruple have signed all the old confessions of faith! Its misfortune was that before long it gave its sanction with fuller evidence, to the most distressing impieties. And then returns the same difficulty we spoke of but now. Does religion depend on your dexterity in manipulating metaphysics? If by any skill of transcendental speculation any one succeeded in throwing a veil over the palpable contradictions of our traditional dogmas, who will assure us that to-morrow some one, more dexterous, will not blow into films the cobwebs which you have so laboriously spun and so dexterously employed?

So much more reason is there for believing that even those who have given themselves to so futile a task have not been able to avoid being much more modern than they would like. It is much less the sense of the old dogmas that they preserve than their forms. They cease not to pour into the old leathern bottles new wine, which makes them burst on all sides. How much time and trouble has been wasted on this unremunerative labour! What! have we not learnt from the experience of the past that it is impossible to avoid rents when a piece of new cloth is sewed on to a piece that is old? What

service was rendered to expiring paganism by the Platonic interpretations of the great mysteries of Alexandria?

The dualism of religion and science is an actual fact; the fact cannot be denied. Moreover, the fact ought not to exist, for it rends man in two, and that in the noblest and most essential parts of his nature. If the evil has no right to be, then there must be a remedy for it. It is a disease, and so can be cured. Let all who think they possess the means communicate their thoughts.

Now, I believe that there is but one way of reconciliation. This one way is, however, sure. It is history.

As a genuine child of our suspicious age, I will take up my position on the positive ground of experience. And I will not condemn myself to close my eyes on the evidences which experience furnishes to our observation. So much the worse for speculation, if it has not the power to reduce the facts into a system; and so much the worse for empiricism, if it will not see the facts which offer themselves to its notice.

Now things (I use the words in its widest sense) offer to us a primordial truth, a truth anterior to all science and all belief; or, to speak more exactly, a truth which is at once scientific and religious, namely, that they *exist in mutual relations*. Objects show themselves to us as a universe, as a *cosmos*. The facts of detail which a first view may present as objections are only apparent contradictions, since, on a little reflection, we see that in the world there is no real destruction, no real exception. Sin itself is not abnormal, for it, like everything else, is subject to constant laws, and finds in pain a barrier which confines it within certain limits.

Things then are the one for the other. They mutually condition and suppose each other; they reciprocally tend toward each other. This is the universal fact on which philosophy has constructed its theory, more rallied than confuted,

of final causes; and the best system of metaphysics now is, in my opinion, that which takes its stand on this primary fact, to deduce therefrom a logical conception of God, of the world, and of man. I refer to the metaphysical school of Germany, of which J. A. Fichte (not to be confounded with a philosopher of the same name belonging to the commencement of this century) is the most distinguished representation, and the work entitled *Die Speculativ Theologie*, the most remarkable manifesto. Let it, however, be observed that I have no intention of developing a system of metaphysics. The sole consequence I wish at this moment to draw from the truth I have mentioned is this—that every subject requires a determiner, every tendency supposes an attraction, every effort implies an end, and that each of these propositions may be reversed. Thus to say that a stone not suspended in the air tends towards the earth, or that the earth attracts a stone not suspended in the air; that the human eye is organised so as to receive impressions from the light, or that the nature of the light is such as to produce impressions on the human eye; that a current of electricity is absorbed in the soil, or that the soil is in a condition to absorb a current of electricity; that the leaves of trees and plants inhale the carbonic acid of the air, or that that gas is by its nature and its presence in the air, fit to penetrate the tissue of the leaves of trees and plants, etc., etc.—this is to enunciate a series of tautologies, of identities, a series which may be prolonged to infinitude, a series whose phenomena depend on a grand law, of which they are only multitudinous ramifications. From this truth man has no escape. If it is not reflected in his intelligence, it speaks in his instincts. This sentiment of the necessary correlation of things is the base of all science. How would man have had the idea of going from the known to the unknown, from the immediate phenomenon to its hidden cause,

from the constant concomitance of two facts to their common reason, had he not been inspired by this fundamental conviction? The tendency of man to know, corresponding to the reality of knowledge, is only one of those innumerable facts of reciprocity entering into the universal law, which we have announced. But now it is an assurance of the same truth which lies at the basis of all primitive religion. How could the view of natural objects have awakened the religious sense in man, had he not observed, or thought he observed, harmony in the objects of his adoration, and a certain relation between himself and those objects? On this ground it is that we declared the truth both religious and scientific. Science and religion certainly meet together in this contradiction given to the idea of chaos.

This general law of reciprocity takes the determinate form of *No tendency without attraction*. In this shape we take the law, for the theme of what ensues. It is then, we affirm, impossible to conceive a tendency without an attraction, or an effort without an aim. This is as impossible as to represent to yourself a river which does not run towards a sea or a lake; or to suppose an affinity between two bodies, inherent in only one of them; or to suppose a foetus having lungs as a respiratory organ, which is not destined to live in the atmosphere.

On this account, If you would understand the destinies of any being you must study its fundamental appearances and what may be called its promises. If Paleontology has reason for deducing the nature and species of fossils from the particular structure of their skeletons: if it has the right of affirming a state of heat very different from the present one, by relying on the relation which must always have existed between the fauna and the flora of an epoch and a place, on the one side—and its temperature, on the other; if the astronomer is authorised from the deviations of a star from its normal orbit to

deduce the certain existence of a heavenly body moving in some part of unknown space; if the physiologist has solid ground for believing that an organ, like the spleen, the function of which can be only conjectured, undoubtedly has a function, and fulfils its office in the economy of the vascular glands of the body; if the animal instinct is always, so long as it remains natural, infallible as to its objects, the reason is that every being suppose the existence to which it tends—and man cannot be an exception.

Here the office of history, its measureless office, as a revealer of man's destiny, appears in full light.

In order to understand man we must not restrict ourselves to the study of an individual, nor even to the study of a people, or a race. We must study human nature in itself, such as we find it more or less developed in all the individuals which compose humanity. Otherwise we shall risk taking as a characteristic of man that which belongs solely to a man, and to elevate an accidental into a general law. It is true that several constituents of human nature in their complete development, fall to the share of only a minority, for instance the sense of the beautiful in art. Nevertheless, the germ of them may be found in the race considered as a whole. In a word, we cannot know man except by knowing mankind.

This comes to the same as the declaration that history alone makes us acquainted with man.

Now, to come immediately to the special subject of our researches, the testimony of history as to the spiritual nature of man is decisive. Man is a religious being. Religion, in the sense of the definition we have given of it, is an integral part of human nature. Much developed with these, almost imperceptible with those, rising or falling as the mind rises or falls, whence it proceeds, it has arisen in the human conscience from the earliest existence of that con-

science. The species is religious, as an eminent writer has said. And let us well note that we speak not exclusively of a sensation more or less vague, fugitive, caused by the appearance, real or unreal, of the Absolute; but of a positive, imperious tendency, deeply modifying the course of events,—modifying did I say? rather determining it with a power which nothing could withstand; attesting its force by arts, customs, monuments; imprinting its features on art, politics, thought. In a word, on the life of every age and every day. Not merely passive is man in regard to religion, he is active as well. It is too little to say that he is religious; since he makes an effort, and so tends voluntarily toward the Absolute, we must add that man is a worshipping being.

Whence the conclusion is inevitable that there is a Being to be worshipped. Adoration implicates the adorable.

I wish to be understood. I do not condemn the ordinary proofs of the existence of God. I believe that some of them are solid, that especially which experimental metaphysics has derived from the final causes of the universe. I should be sorry to discourage anyone, and for my own part I have by no means renounced the purely philosophic research after the higher truths. But I advisedly interdict myself a field on which at present great differences occupy earnest minds. I am unwilling to deprive myself of the immense advantage which I owe to the ground I occupy. If I expound a metaphysical doctrine I am obliged to remove logically all the difficulties objected, in the name of abstract logic, to the idea of God which I should hence have acquired. To propose a metaphysical system is a task, the very idea of which appals me; and I avow that after having taken much trouble to seek absolute truth by that rugged path, I have learnt to wonder at those metaphysicians who are convinced of the full reality of their system. On the contrary, from the historical point of

view, I have the right to reply quite simply, "I do not know," when I am asked how I harmonise the ideas which one must logically form of an adorable Being with certain logical difficulties of which religious philosophy has not yet found a perfectly satisfactory solution. It is in the same way that every experimental science arrives finally at a mystery, the admission of which does not authorise anyone to contest the results previously obtained.

I will make a direct application of this view to one of the philosophical and religious questions most debated at the present hour. I mean pantheism. By pantheism I understand—every idea of God which denies the divine consciousness, and accordingly the divine personality, so as to identify God and the unity of the world. Pantheism owes its attraction for poetic and religious souls to its rendering the universal presence of God sensible to the soul, instead of banishing him, as does deism and some kinds of theism, to an infinite distance. So far as pantheism insists on the immanence of God in the world I agree with it. This is certain: a God separated from the world is one being by the side of another, and is not absolute; a world, any being separated from God, from the God, from the Absolute Cause, is a notion without meaning; and up to the present, the religious sentiment, far from rising in opposition, views with complacency the idea of God as of the Being who contains in himself life, movement, and existence. But when, proceeding further, reposing on a supposed incompatibility between man's self-consciousness and the Absolute Being,—affirming that the world, if distinct, limits God, pantheism sees in the absolute being nothing more than the unconscious and impersonal unity of things, I part company from him without hesitation. Is it possible for me, a personal being, endued with consciousness and reflexion, to adore a blind being, a being,—who however infinite, is by

that blindness my inferior? Can an impersonal ideal be my ideal? Were I a madrepora or an *echinus marinus*, that might be; but when I adore, I must have for the object of my adorations a being to whom I can say, "O Thou!" The personality of God is an essential element of religion to such an extent that, to say the truth, the history of religion is composed of personifications of the objects successively adored by man. From the moment when, better instructed, as he thought, he saw only things where he formerly saw persons, he ceased to adore them, and carried his worship to some other shrine. It may also be remarked that religious pantheists cannot prevent themselves from personifying God, as soon as they give a certain vivacity to their religious sentiments. Full of confidence in nature, I return then to the testimony of human nature, and since there is an Adorable Being, I shall not cease to attribute to him that which renders him adorable, at the same time confessing that we are always in danger of lowering the Infinite Being by applying to him qualities which we are forced to borrow from our finite nature. But that confession does not trouble us greatly. For if those qualities are not vigourously exact, the reason is that they are below, not above, the reality. However, let not pantheism glory so much over its logical value. It is a power at the present day because it re-acts against the deplorable deism bequeathed to us by the 18th century, and because it victoriously combats that false dogma, which has in some sort become traditional. If ever pantheism should in its turn become so, it would see that if, as it boasts, logic conducts to it, logic also leads away from it. Were there nothing but the testimony of our moral consciousness to break the connexion, that testimony would suffice. For, in good logic, that testimony forms the most invincible of premises, and a premise the immediate consequence of which is palpable.

We are able to apply our historical point of view also to the second demand of religion, a personal immortality. If man is a religious being, adoring the Adorable Being, he tends to the infinite. His end is then of such a kind that always attracted by it, he never reaches it completely. There is in him something by which he is distinguished essentially from his bodily and animal nature, which not only does not tend to this infinite but, as we might say, would be in the wrong in so doing, since its duration is visibly and necessarily limited. Up to a certain degree of human development the religion and the immortality of man support and sustain each other mutually. If my individuality is to be annihilated I am but a transitory being, and am wrong to pursue an end which the essential conditions of my being interdict. As well command a terrestrial being to put himself by leaps beyond the attraction of the globe. The projection which, obeying my inner law, I direct towards boundless space, I am forced immediately to bring back in a curve, and in a very narrow curve, to the surface of the earth; and then my nature is deceptive. On one side it tends to the infinite; on the other, it is unable to surpass a contracted limit. Now, nature is never deceptive. The religious life, which here meets with the moral life, requires me at every instant to be superior to the impulses of my carnal nature. It may even be that the former demands of me the complete sacrifice of the latter; history informs us that man has often made to God the sacrifice of his bodily life, and then it is that man has specially shown himself man, realising the ideal of human nature. Is this not a proof that the religious life, and consequently conscious life, is prolonged beyond the body. Has not all life for its primary tendency the assertion of its own existence at the cost of inferior races? This is its fundamental axiom. Its first instinct is to preserve self, and so to destroy whatever is hostile. Is this self-affirmation mere self-destruction?

I have spoken of a certain degree of human development. In truth history teaches us that the belief in immortality is not as ancient as religion. This belief took shape insensibly at different dates according to difference of peoples and races. Before forming part of the confession of faith of the human race, it required the distinct sentiment of individuality, which was not very clear in the earliest ages of our race; and besides it required a notion of moral destiny, a consciousness of man's value, to which the infantine thought of the earliest humanity had no means of access. It was necessary that man should feel that he was not finite, that he had not given all he promised before the death of the body. It was necessary that the human mind should have in part freed itself from the shackles of matter, and that human life should have become somewhat spiritual. This is so certain that the first rudiments of personal immortality in populations, which as yet had a clear idea of it, consisted in the belief that certain men of mark had escaped from death. The heroes of the Greeks, Enoch, Moses, Elijah among the Hebrews, may serve as examples. Human nature had in them displayed its energy in an exceptional manner, and the people felt that such men must have been superior to death. What is remarkable is, that before the appearance of this belief, there was ignorance rather than negation, and in reality man has never believed in his own absolute annihilation. The door always remained open to the possibility of another life. The primitive man formed to himself, of the state beyond the tomb, a vague idea as of sleep; and it may be said, that in the the degree in which the consciousness of his superior destiny awoke in him. he awakened his dead. Besides, the more history extends the fields of its conquests, the more consistency does it give to that idea, which at first seemed only a play of the imagination, namely, that there is a close parallelism between the develop-

of the human species, and the development of the individual. Observe little children—their goings on, their intuitions, their instincts, their language, and you will detect the most astonishing resemblance to that which we know of ante-historical humanity. And as in the life of the child certain revelations of the future, certain presentiments of its destiny as man, arise in its soul; as the youth, who feels his forces growing, exchanges by little and little the timidities and fears of his earliest days for the boldness and firmness which befit virility, and gives himself a clearer account of the life which awaits him; as the innocent virgin finds in the new sentiment of modesty the harbinger of a new world which she cannot define, yet whose dim outline takes possession of her beating heart, so may we say, that on some occasion or other man discovered that he was immortal. From that time religion and belief in immortality grew up together, the one always profiting by the progress of the other, as was proper since the two are nourished from a common sap. This great revelation of history, the natural tendency of men toward the infinite, this tendency which at the same time affirms the existence of an infinite which attracts man, is more powerful than any demonstration for everyone who is accessible to the idea of a universe or cosmos.

Sometimes an objection is taken to this *consensus gentium* in favour of personal immortality founded on the Buddhist doctrine of the Nirvana. According to that, Buddha promises annihilation as the highest reward to his elect, professes to show them the way to reach it, and yet Buddhism has become the religion of a moiety of the world. I am of opinion that the opposite is the right consequence. To be convinced of this, it is enough to know on what condition Buddhism promises the total annihilation of individuality. Millions of years, hundreds of heavens to traverse, fearful renunciations

barely suffice. So difficult does man find the annihilation of his individuality! Budddism really teaches that man has only to allow himself to go according to his natural law in order to exist for ever. Besides, it must not be forgotten that Buddhism, a moral advance beyond Brahminism, is by no means a step forward religiously. Buddhism is man disgusted with nature, as Brahminism was man intoxicated with nature. What is lacking to the one and to the other is mind victoriously disengaging itself from nature, and conciliating nature with itself by making nature its servant. Buddhism is the religion of aged and decrepit races who no longer hope for anything in the future. Finally it would be very erroneous to fancy pure Buddhism to be the real religion of the Buddhist people. No religion, Christianity not excepted, has become more difficult to recognise than Buddhism in its divers branches, and the Buddhist peoples do not really profess the genuine doctrine. Thus travellers report that the populations of Indo-China conceive of the Nirvana as a state of absolute repose, in which the blessed have as much rice as they wish, without the necessity of procuring it by labour.

Has the testimony of history been exhausted? It is doubtless much to have found in it an Adorable God and a personal life, going toward the infinite. But as yet we have in some sort only a theoretical religion, and we know that the religious tendency of the human mind is not satisfied with passive, instinctive aspiration toward infinite. Man has need not to feel merely but to live religiously. He requires a practical religion, a religion which impresses its seal on his life. That life religion must idealise, but this it cannot do except by penetrating it, and embodying itself in it. We have forms; we have a vase—how can we fill them?

Here history is the revealer. By teaching us what man is she teaches us how we ought to live so as to live religiously.

There is no one who, seriously studying history, can hence gather the idea that humanity is only an aggregate of individuals. History is neither nominalist nor realist, but it declares that the species acts on the individual, and the individual acts on the species. It belongs to philosophy to explain, if it can, the great mystery of the reciprocal relations of the particular and the general. History has only to establish and reproduces the fact.

Now the fact is this—each of us is what he is only because he represents a result of human forces anterior to himself, and absolutely independent of his free will. The correlation of the human race is a visible fact, a fact which will ever become more visible. If we separate from our individual character what we owe to our education and to the education of our educators, what remains? Sciences, arts, political condition, material life, tastes, even temperament—all this constitutes in each of us for the most part a legacy of our ancestors. On the broad field of history races appear more real than individuals; and as in the eyes of a European who lands in China all the natives seem to have the same visage, because their general type strike him before he is able to note individual diversities, so, on the high lands of history, when one takes a general and rapid view of humanity, the race sums itself up in a small number of collective individuals; and these in their turn end by sinking into one who goes whither God leads him.

The reason is that humanity realises a plan. What is its destiny on earth? It would perhaps be presumptuous to declare it yet. But this we know, namely, that chaos exists not there any more than elsewhere. It does not even appear to exist to any but those who rise not high enough to see things unroll themselves, and show their true nature and mutual dependencies. The single fact that already there are attempts at a philosophy of history, no matter whether successful or not

—that single fact proves the statement. If as yet no one has certainly discovered the exact law, many have shewn that a law exists and operates. Already we can see converging lines. Already we are able to assert that the primitive tribes which swarmed over the surface of the globe, obeyed hidden laws of which they were not aware. Already we see that civilisation follows a march almost rhythical, going from station to station from upper Asia toward the West—upper Asia constantly abandoned by ancient races, and as constantly occupied by fresh ones. For evidently each race has its destiny—its youth, its maturity, its decay, its death:—death, I say, unless in its development it finds a principle of life which may prove to it a source of indefinite rejuvenescence. Such is my hope for the Christian races, who have found the tree of life, whose fruits make those who eat of them live for ever.

This is the realstic side of history, and so visible it is that it has produced an illusion in those who, the first perceived it. They were misled into forgetting individualities and into denying them. This was a great error in the eyes of the same history. Man is not only a sample of his species, as a plant or an animal. If his species acts on him he acts on his species. Our inmost sense, our self-love informs us of the fact. All the great steps in human progress have a personal origin. The individual by himself can do nothing, whatever superiority we suppose him to possess, unless the multitude by which he is surrounded possesses at least some sparks of the same fire which burns in him; it is the individual which kindles the flame, and the individual only which can set the whole in a blaze. Humanity grows in virtue of the force of its men of genius. They, it is true, have come forth from its womb, and, like others, have been raised by anterior elevations, but they repose only to rise to greater alti-

tude; and long did they remain solitary on the heights to which they climbed. Genius is the most personal of all things. Here history is decidedly individualist.

I spoke of progress. Persons who overlook the general in clinging too much to details sometimes deny the reality of progress. I grant that progress does not move in a straight line:—far from it. I acknowledge that if humanity is proceeding upward, it is not after the manner of a pyramid, but rather that of a chain of mountains which converge to their highest point through a deep abyss subjoined to every fresh elevation. But how can it be denied that definitively, progress results from each of the great revolutions of history. It cannot, for example, be denied that humankind, as a whole, has grown considerably since the decay of the classic civilisation. Its dominion over the earth is far differently secured than it was in the finest days of Greece and Rome; and if we must not over-rate our industrial discoveries, we must equally not forget that the enslavement of nature is the necessary and constant condition of the reign of mind. As to intellectual progress, properly so called, we remark that the rivalry between the ancients and the moderns comes not on the carpet here. The question is not whether our highest skill in these days could produce poems like those of Homer, or build palaces equal to those of Babylon. It is certain also that humanity has given birth to things whose equals will never be seen again. In vain shall man, arrived at the age of reflexion, attempt to produce over again the fairy dreams, the sweet songs, and the fond desires of its early youth. But the true question is, to know whether in the elements whose combination forms our spiritual life, we have not more than was possessed by the ancients. Thus put, the question admits of only one answer. Evidently we have more, since we have what they had, and in addition, what our immediate prede-

cessors have left us. Their thought, their arts, their civilisation, are known to us. To these we have added the heritage we have received from our fathers; as well as our own acquisitions; and we propogate the whole over the entire earth. Definitively, if the spirit of the ancient East, of Greece, of Rome, is one day to become the patrimony of the whole of human kind, the result will be due to us. At this moment Plato is interpreted at Melbourne, and Moses at Canton. There are Greek statues at New York, and the Sanscrit has at least twenty chairs in Europe. A moment's reflexion will suffice to learn what a mass of important facts is involved in those words, seized as it were, in flying over the map of the world. Intellectual life, formerly the privilege of an almost imperceptible minority, has become accessible to many millions of men, and will extend indefinitely, so as to deposit constantly more and more of the best possessions of past generations in those that are to come. To explain my thought by a single example—never again shall we write poems like those of Homer; but, preserving these, we add to them those of Dante, those of Milton, those of Goethe, and we cause them all to be read by all.

But if there is a domain of the mind in which progress, considered from aloft, is clearly visible, it is that which we have hitherto purposely passed in silence, that of religion. No longer does the sun set on Christendom. Consider what the religions were which Christianity found in the world. Then can you judge of the magnitude of the transformation. In a merely human point of view we may consider Christianity as the final religion of mankind. For it is the religion of the invading races, the races who are filling desert continents, and will shortly graft themselves on the decrepid civilisations, as well as the barbarisms, of the nations that are not Christian.

This brings us back to our subject. Humanity then, develops itself by the action of individual genius, and the individual himself does not successfully unfold except by not breaking the bond which unites him to the general development of his species. The duty and the destiny of each of us is individual development, since each of us naturally tends to the infinite under the influence of the inmost powers of his being; but it results from the natural law of all development, that isolation is of no service to man, whether in religion or any other thing; and I will say that this is true more emphatically in religion than in ought else. In religion indeed the action of individual genius is most marked; nay, it is even indispensable. For religion being essentially a tendency, an aspiration, a flight toward the infinite, inspiration only can in this domain be truly a source of revelation. Here is the reason why philosophy has never been able to found a religion. To ascend to God it is less needful to express his essence with exactitude, than to receive the impulse of those who have approached him most nearly. Our individual religion must receive its sap and its strength from that which has come down to us from holy men of old who were led by the spirit of God. Moreover, as a law of our nature determines that the energy of our sentiments and our emotions should increase or decrease according as we find them in others or not, it is clear that the flame of religion cannot be kept up except by permanent contact with religious humanity.

But what is the religion of our race? We have already given it a name: it is Christianity. We see that this is the future religion of human kind. Its origin too discloses to us this its high destiny. The Shemitic race, whence it comes, has obviously for its historical mission the foundation of the universal religion. For it founded monotheism as a popular

faith; and little else did it do. Shemitism, by its three great religious founders, Moses, Jesus, and Mahomet, has accomplished its task. Revelation has been its speciality. It is under the tents of Shem, it is in the race of Abraham, that the religious sap has distilled, which vivifies the world. This is not a dogma of the Church, it is the voice of history. At present it is manifest that of those three names, that of Jesus is the one which must soar above the others as the supreme revealer. We shall see this better immediately when we speak of his doctrine. But remaining in the circle of ideas over which we have gone, we may support ourselves on the fact, that Jesus only has been able to conquer the races of the future. The people in whose bosom he was born, a withered tree since the day of his appearance, makes progress now only under the indirect influence of him whom it rejected. The reign of Mahomedanism is passed; its fall is inevitable. If moreover, we compare the idea of God, such as it came forth from those three prophetic minds, we shall easily understand why the God of Jesus Christ must gain the victory over the two others. We may place on two nearly parallel lines, Moses and Mahomed. Both preached in substance the same God, and what would distinguish Mahomed to his advantage, the consciousness of religious universality, and of immortality, disappears if you reflect on the extreme distance in antiquity at which Moses stands, and the ease with which Mosaism, in its natural evolution, arrived on its part, at those two elements of true religion. Now, the God of Jesus is alone adorable for us, for he is superior to the God of the law, purely exterior to the world, who was taught equally by the prophet of Sinai and that of Mecca. The God of Moses, and the God of Mahomed are unique, invisible, pure spirits, absolute masters of the universe. But the God of Christ is all that, and besides, he is our Father who

is in heaven, whose Holy Spirit pleads in our hearts, while his continuous, regular, all prevailing activity, reveals itself even in the humblest details. Here, certainly, is the only true God—the God whom we must adore, and whom men must always adore. We cannot adore beings whose superior we know. God must be to us incomparable, and since Christ has brought to light the divine ideal with which his own mind was full, we must adore either his God and Father, or nothing. The God of Christ is the God toward whom the human race is advancing; it is the Being whom the species ceases not to contemplate since the son of man has shown him forth. In the name of our nature and of history, which is its faithful reflexion, we declare that if we would grow religiously, we must pay our adoration to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For if our individual religious development is a branch, the living trunk of which is to be that of humanity, and if Jesus of Nazareth has pronounced the word which alone responds to the aspirations of the religious soul, it ensues that we must unite ourselves as filled with his spirit, to the human society which is only the prolongation in time and in space of his work upon earth. We must attach ourselves to the Christian Church.

But, it may be asked, does history supply reasons to think Jesus himself will not be surpassed? Are we permitted to speak of a final revealer? Who knows what the future has in reserve? Does not Christianity itself incline toward an end, distant, perhaps, but inevitable? And has not the poet sung with a moved voice these two melancholy lines,

A secret thing, O Jesus, fills me with alarm,—

It is the echo of thy voice ever growing weaker.

The reason is that the poet with a lyre moved by the breeze of the moment, confounded the voice of Christ with the voice of tradition. “The voice of Christ ever growing weaker?”

On the contrary, it is only in the future, when the criticism of the traditions by which Christianity is for the most part covered, shall have done its work, and passed into the public mind—it is then, and then only that the amplitude and imperishable worth of the gospel will be generally understood. Historically speaking, there are reasons for thinking the period of great religious inspirations in humankind is passed. The end of the actual world is still far distant, for our race is still far from having realised the design of God on the earth. Nevertheless the end will come. Philosophical and physical reasons show the fact, and we may now say that we are near the age of maturity. In future, reflexion has the better of spontaneity in man's historical course. It is shewn also by the development of the science of history; man does not thus turn back on his past until he has come to the age of reflexion. Then; inspiration with individuals, with natures, with races is a privilege of youth. Besides Christ is not passable. He who preached the Holy God, loving all men since he attracts all, and who sacrificed himself for the love of man, has secured a place which no one is able to take from him, and accomplished a work which cannot be repeated. For, any way, the second could be only an imitation of the first. Finally, Christ in boldly announcing the idea of indefinite progress, in calling man to the perfection of God himself, in proclaiming the universal brotherhood, in making his religion consist not in dogmas, nor in rites, but before all in the state of the heart, and in a continued impulse toward God—in thus founding a pure religious spiritualism, Christ has brought it about that all ulterior progress of humanity in religion can henceforth be only applications of the principles which he bequeathed to the race. It is thus that many of the moral and religious reforms, on which primitive Christianity is silent, or speaks but vaguely,—the abolition

of slavery, religious toleration, the mitigation of war, the penalties of crime, &c., &c.,—are genuine and direct fruits of the spirit with which Jesus inoculated his first disciples. But he who in word and deed sets forth the principle of ceaseless perfectibility is, by the very act, the generator of all future improvements. An ancient legend which Jerome, in the fifth century, found among the Jewish Christians of Syria, relates that, at the baptism of Christ, the Spirit of God said to him, “My Son, thee have I waited for in all the prophets, that in thee I might take my rest; for thou art my rest, my first born son, and thou reignest for ever.” This is a mythical envelope of a profoundly true idea. In Jesus of Nazareth the spirit has uttered the word eternity, the final word, the word of which all that remains can be only the endless development. In virtue of this, Christ is really he who has fulfilled all. He is truly the son of man, the centre and the essence of humanity, and it is by a very good right that he has cut history in two moieties.

This, however, will not appear certain, except to him who will take the pains to learn exactly in what consists the teaching and the work of Jesus. For this it is necessary to interrogate himself, and not to confound Christianity with any Christian tradition, however ancient and venerable. It is absolutely necessary to rid oneself of the positively false idea that Christianity, as such, is really interested in the triumph of any system of geology, of astronomy, of physics. It is necessary to consider the books of the Bible as documents over which criticism has the same rights as over all the other written monuments of the ancient world. It is also necessary to distinguish between the thought of Christ and that of his historians, by whom the former was not always conceived in all its spirituality. Thus it is clear that they insisted on the miraculous side presented to their eyes by the appearance and

life of their divine hero, while Christ himself is in open conflict with the prejudice which will have miracle to be the necessary sign of a true revelation, and has taught the world to recognise the work of God in the regular action of natural forces. It may without exaggeration be said that on this point it has taken eighteen centuries to bring Christian thought to rejoin the thought of the founder of Christianity. It is necessary to put aside the inevitable elements of imperfection thrown into the forms of his utterance by the intellectual condition in the midst of which he lived, of which he of necessity partook, and to consider him as a revealer only there where he offers himself as such, that is to say where he affirms, as so many truths drawn from his own consciousness, the essential bases of the religion he wishes to establish. To effect this distinction it is sufficient to learn what he makes the conditions of salvation, or, to employ his usual expression, entrance into the Kingdom of God.

You are then struck with the marvellous spiritual sobriety and solidity which distinguish his revelations. He places his foot on the territory acquired before his day by Judaism, that is to say by monotheism, immortality, and the prophetic idea of the Kingdom of God, which was to come. Then he grafts on that living plant religious and moral principles, perfectly simple, but at the same time incalculably rich. Nothing in truth more striking than the teachings in which Jesus compares his work with the imperceptible grain cast into the earth, and possessing in itself the vigour to become the largest of trees. By an expression of rare beauty, "Our Father who art in Heaven," he purifies the idea of God from the poor or gross notions retained, and sometimes even reinforced, by Jewish monotheism. Nothing more absolute, and also nothing more attractive for man than this representation of God. As to the relation in which man ought to stand to God in order to

make true religion his own, the essential, according to Christ, is, that man divesting himself of all illusion as to his own merits, or those of external things,—such as birth, race, works of devotion, traditions, orthodoxies,—entering simply into his own consciousness, turning back entirely on himself, should open his heart to that moral and religious disposition which may be termed thirsting after God. Then, the Supreme Ideal, toward which it is necessary always to tend, reveals himself to the soul. Moral perfection—that is the end; the point of departure is the feeling of imperfection. But we must set out and go on toward the end with a full faith, an entire confidence in God, by whom we are called at once to begin and to complete our journey. Christ declares that salvation is assured to repentant and bruised souls; to the poor or needy in spirit, that is those who feel their wants and long after the fulness of God's riches; to the poor in heart; to the pitying; to those who hunger and thirst for the right. With an authority which only a life so holy as his own could add to such a doctrine, he announces God's pardon to every sinner who turns from the error of his way; that faith which is as necessary to moral recovery as it appears uncertain to him who fears taking for a divine behest the selfish desires of his own corrupted heart. In order to rise toward God it is in effect necessary that man should begin with the feeling that his previous faults and infirmities are virtually annulled the moment he seriously sets his foot on the road which leads to perfection. One may even say that it is above all as the herald of pardon that Jesus is a revealer. When a consciousness as penetrated as was his with the holiness of God experiences no repugnance to the idea of pity always open to repentance, and on the contrary proclaims it to be unlimited, one may be well assured that such is truly the image of the true God as reflected in the most limpid mirror. Accordingly

God's pardoning mercy, or the changeless will of God that man should renounce sin in order to rise to perfection, may be likened to an eternal note, to the diapason of which our souls must be made to correspond and vibrate. Moreover, nothing more spiritual than all this doctrine. Religion is emphatically moral, as morality is essentially religious. The two become one in the queen of the spiritual faculties, love, the two great objects of which are God and man: God as supreme perfection, man as an always perfectible spirit. External forms and ceremonies are of secondary importance. Not any are necessary. Not the shadow of an hierarchy, not the shadow of a priesthood in this religion which professes to put man once "come to himself" (Luke xv., 17) into immediate and personal communion with God. Never does Jesus lay down any dogmatic conditions. Never does he make the religious character depend on the adoption of any form of doctrine. He even goes so far as to declare that men may meet together having those dispositions of mind which he requires, who nevertheless have never known himself (Matt. xxv., 31-40). However, he is conscious of his personal value as the founder of the Kingdom of God among men. He has the sense, perfectly legitimate in the historical point of view, of the true destiny of his people, as well as of himself. He considers himself as realising the prophecies which spoke of the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth. He professes to fulfil them, and to fulfil them in effect, while removing from them whatever chimerical or political views they contained. Since he feels himself in intimate harmony with the divine will, since his work is nothing less than the spiritual conquest of human kind, he knows he is the true Christ, the true Messiah. A new world was to be the consequence of his appearance in history. The future appeared to his vision as summed up in an immense

revolution of everything, whence would come forth a form of humanity renewed, of which he was to be King by the authority and influence of the Holy Spirit. Fully inspired of God, he knows that his spirit must draw men nearer and nearer to himself, and penetrate and pervade them like leaven. His personal life, which is the embodiment of his doctrine, and which transmutes that doctrine into a positive reality; his holy and joyous activity is to be the primitive hearth, the flame and heat of which will gradually extend to all by which it is approached. He came, as he declared, to kindle a fire on the earth, and his task is accomplished as soon as he sees it in a flame; never will it go out. On this account it is that he invites men to attach themselves to him personally, to remain in spiritual communion with him; in a word, to have faith in him. Finally, he reckons on his premature death, the inevitable issue, the reward easy to foresee, of a life so ideal in a world so much below itself, in order that the remembrance of him may never be effaced from men's memories. Here, also, his intuition of the future is wonderfully just. Why has this holy one been crucified? This is the question which the cross ceaselessly puts to humanity indifferent or incredulous, and the answer which must be given goes a long way. It is not, then, without reason that he connects with his death a touching symbol of the new covenant which the Christian Church is to repeat piously from age to age, as the most august of its ceremonies, as preaching with irresistible energy the great truth confirmed by history, namely the communion of religious souls with the Persecuted Holy One.

Such are the principles of Christianity. Here is something that is indestructible. Indestructible is it even when you have allowed independent and strictly historical criticism to apply itself in full liberty to the evangelical narratives. And now we turn with confidence to the men of our age whose

heart is right, saying to them: Do you not desire such a religion? inspect it closely; Christianity is more than a religion, it is *the* religion, the religion realised.

It is with the Christian Church as it is with religion. If in itself it exists independently of the diverse forms which it has assumed, it is to us concrete and real only in one or other of those forms. You do not attach yourself to the Christian Church while you live apart from its manifestations, though you even feel a philosophical sympathy for them all. This conception of the Christian life is a false idea, too widely spread in these times, and the result is, that those who are actuated by it do not really share in the common Christian life. But I also acknowledge that to many persons the selection of a form appears impossible, and that the repugnance to becoming sacetary has its legitimate side. Here, especially, comes into prominence the antagonism between science and modern reason on the one side, and our natural religious wants on the other. People remain in the church in which they were born, without taking any personal interest in what is done within it, and no one of the other Christian communion appears to them to deserve explicit and complete espousal.

For my part, I am persuaded that this difficulty comes from ignorance of the true historical conditions of Christianity, and of Protestantism, its most modern branch. You may be assured by the picture I have just given of the essential principles of the religion of Jesus Christ, that they live in the midst of a crowd of different dogmas and forms. The dogmas have imposed themselves on those purely moral and religious principles, in virtue of the simple reason that those principles, and their mode of appearance in history, presented problems to be solved,—problems which Christian thought could, and did, solve in several manners. It happened that

under the traditional prestige one of those manners passed for absolutely true, and was held as such as long as the level of mind did not rise above its level. When the former stood superior to the latter, schism ensued. The Reformation wished to purify Christian doctrine from the heterogeneous elements which the stream of time had thrown into it. In fact, it brought Christian doctrine back much nearer to its original spirit than could be permitted by the church of the middle ages. It deposed its dogmatical convictions in official symbols, called "Confessions of faith," and these confessions of faith answered not amiss to the state of knowledge as it stood in the sixteenth century. Then that happened to it which had happened to the Church before the Reformation, namely, the Protestant dogmas became traditional in their turn, and presented an object of attack to the more enlightened criticism of the times. Here the resemblance stops. The Reformed Churches being founded on the principle of Christian liberty, in the face of religious tradition, could not consistently deny the exercise of that liberty in its own communion, and hence ensued its variations,—variations which alarm traditionalistic minds, but which with the thinker and historian, are its true glory. It is a natural consequence that at the present hour there is not one considerable Protestant Church which rigorously gives the force of law to all the points of its confession of faith. Being a Lutheran in Germany by no means signifies the acknowledgment of all the dogmas signed in the Confession of Augsburg. Being a Protestant in France in no way implies the adoption of all the articles of the Confession of Rochelle. The greatest dogmatic diversities divide amongst them the chairs of Protestant theology. You may clearly distinguish in the debates of the churches sprung from the Reformation, a right and a left; the latter imbued with the necessity of modifying Christian dogma so that it may

be always in harmony with the development of modern thought; the former resisting the required transformations, and granting them but slowly, in the fear of losing the treasure contained in the old dogmas. It is possible to take a decided part in favour of the one or of the other of these parties without disowning the relative legitimacy of the other. In the historical point of view they are necessary each to each, and it is their antagonism which constitutes the spring of the development of religious thought. This is the reason why from the time of their origin, the Protestant Churches have been in a state of interior development. To be a member of the one or of the other is, on the one side, to be connected with the historical Christian Church which is most advanced; and on the other, to remain independent in regard to the particular doctrines to which adherence is felt to be impossible.

It is essential that this should be well understood. Protestantism, to justify its origin, must recognise as its basis the legitimacy of free inquiry. But it is an error to make free inquiry the sole basis of Protestantism. When that is done, nothing distinguishes Protestantism from philosophy. Protestant free examination is Christian. Its office is to criticise tradition, on the ground that it is necessary to correct rather than to destroy, to reform rather than to abolish. Below Protestant free inquiry then lies the grand idea of the ascending development of humanity; this it is which, in our judgment, demonstrates its legitimacy. This is the sole method of progress which can justify itself in the historical point of view. On the other side, if you call to mind in what consists the essential principles of Christianity, their strictly religious and moral nature, the entire liberty they leave to human intelligence, provided the heart is pure and the conscience is alive, you must admit that science may move in the bosom of the Protestant Church with an independence as entire

as it could wish. But let us not sunder ourselves from the historic development of the human mind. In its passage over the centuries it must have gathered up much "wood, hay, stubble," (Cor. iii., 12.) The fires of criticism must burn up these base materials, but yet so as to save the pure gold. But for this truth, history would be an empty dream. Thus at the present day, the doctrines of the Reformation are in a state of transformation. The modern Protestant theology aspires not to deny them absolutely, but to preserve the truth that is in them, by filtering them through a medium more conformed to our science and our reason. The dogmas of original sin, the trinity, the incarnation, justification by faith, future rewards, the inspiration of the sacred writings may serve as examples. On the first of these dogmas renouncing the idea of an original perfection, the reality of which is contrary to reason and to all our historical analogies, modern theology would insist on the evil influence which determines to evil an individual plunged in society where sin reigns, on the necessary passage from a state of innocence to a state of moral consciousness and struggle, on the fall which man endures when he sinks from his higher nature to his lower, and renounces God's will to serve his own. As to the trinity, avoiding the scholastic and contradictory tritheism of the old creeds, intent on vigorously preserving God's essential unity and at the same time his conscious or personal life, this theology attaches itself to the grand idea of the divine word pervading the world, as the uttered thought, the objective revelation of God, conceived as manifesting himself to himself in his works. In humanity this eternal word becomes the Holy Spirit, the light which lightens every man coming into the world, but which shines in all its splendour in Jesus Christ. In this series of ideas the incarnation loses that stamp of absolute contradiction which it takes from the orthodox idea of one and the same person who

is at the same time God and man, finite and infinite, localised and omnipresent, praying and prayed to, knowing and not knowing all things, and impeccable yet tempted, &c. The pure and real humanity of Christ is the basis of the system; and the system may be summed up in these words: The Son of Man is the Son of God. Man is justified by faith not as the old orthodoxy taught, that is, because he believes that satisfaction was given to God in his place and on his behalf, but because he has confidence in the eternal love of God and in his own destination for good, as evidenced by Christ in his life and in his death. The eternity of future sufferings gives place to an idea more in conformity with sound philosophy and the revelation of infinite love, according to which pain resulting from sin can have for object only the amelioration of the sinner, and special stress is laid on the spiritual truth that heaven and hell are much less different places than different states of the soul. The inspiration of the Scriptures, that dogma the truth of which consisted in the scriptural value of the Biblical books as giving a sure basis for faith, as supplying aliment to piety, and as elevating the heart, more and more loses its miraculous character to approach analogous phenomena, drawn from religions in general, or from other fields where the mind of man reveals itself as inspired. The change of views however does not take from the Bible its character as a truly divine book, still does it remain in religion The Book of Books.

I limit myself to these brief indications, wishing to add that as no one must look here for an explicit confession of faith, still less for an official description of modern Protestantism. I wished merely to illustrate by these instances how and with what results the transformation of Christian dogma is at present going forward.

Adherence to the Protestant Church then does not signify

the adoption of its authoritative forms of belief, which you have not grounds to deny, and which I have not grounds to accept; still less, to accept religiously what I repel rationally. In this view to be a Christian is to participate in the general life of the Christian Church, and to take part with others in the labours of the Christian mind, in seeking a better expression for itself, without on that account reviling the old tents under which our fathers reposed. This transformation of doctrines in Protestantism is not a totally new fact. What is now called orthodoxy, that is to say, the right side of the chamber withstanding the claims put forth by modern thought, is itself pervaded by points of view, ideas, beliefs which would have rendered it incompatible with the orthodoxy of the sixteenth century; and this change we are far from laying to its charge as a reproach. If examples are required, the dogmas of radical corruption, predestination, even the trinity would supply them. To enter the Protestant Church then is to become a citizen of a free country, a country which freely discusses and reforms its constitution every time its revision becomes necessary. It is to float on the stream of religious thought which conducts those who give themselves up to the current to lands ever new and smiling, without on that account separating from the original fountain of the waters. I insist on this point because it is solely in the Protestant Church that I see the means of now bringing religion and science into agreement. Every well informed Christian, the member of another church, is drawn forward by his knowledge, and backward by his belief.

And when, filled with the sentiment which history inspires of the development of Christian thought on its immovable basis, namely, the life eternal in progress toward God by spiritual communion with Christ, we personally share in the life of the Church; then are we happy. We live in the

society of the faithful. That society we seek, in that we find delight. There is between the unlettered man, who prays by your side, and yourself, the same distance as exists between the actual moment of Christian thought, and one of its anterior moments:—there is this distance and no other:—no rupture, no disdain, no pride. You are both members of the same body. A continuous line leads from him to you, from you to him, as from the past to the present, and perhaps in pure religion he is much your superior. Not to remove to a distance from him will be of immense advantage to yourself, and on your part, you will contribute toward the elevation of his beliefs. It is pleasant to be able to follow one's wife and children to the house of God. It is pleasant to raise one's thought toward the Almighty Father in common prayer. It is pleasant, while lost in the assembled multitude, to receive one's part of the exhortations, councils, instructions, and solace, offered from the pulpit. It is pleasant to sing the old psalm. It is pleasant to celebrate those great festivals of the Church in which are embodied the sublime ideas of hope, self-renunciation, immortality, progress and spiritual regeneration, in remembrances and symbols of ideal beauty. It is pleasant to commune with brothers and sisters, and to warm ourselves with them all at the always genial hearth which Christ keeps burning in his Church. Life takes colour from the rays of the Sun of Christianity; it thereby gains in dignity, in joy, in morals, in energy. The religious sentiment,—that precious sentiment which, as we have seen, contains in itself all the greatest hopes;—that flower of the soul which the exclusive pursuit of business, or scientific studies, would blight and wither, is continually refreshed by ceaselessly plunging into the grand religious waters of humanity.

The sum of all this is that the man of our day who unites with scientific development, religious wants, ought to love in

humanity the religion which is its higher life; in religion, Christianity, which is the supreme revelation of that higher life; in Christianity, the Christian Church, which is its historical development; in the Christian Church, Protestantism, which represents at once the ancient and the modern elements of the Christian Church; and finally, in Protestantism, the tendency which is most Protestant, which continues the reformation, and forms the advance guard of religious thought.

Thereby you will of course be in the minority. But is not that the condition of all progress? Nevertheless, though you are the advanced guard, you feel yourself not the less supported by the great body of the army which marches in your rear, and follows you in the conquest of the life eternal. Is it only in religion that the minority leads the rest?

THE FUTURE LIFE;
A REVIEW OF THE ATTEMPT OF STRAUSS TO
DESTROY ITS FOUNDATIONS.

BY ALBERT REVILLE, D.D.

“Fine days for theology, days of hope and joy, were those which brought to an end the first third of our century. The prediction of the patriarch of modern philosophy seemed about to be accomplished, not only in regard to religion in general, but also quite particularly in regard to Christianity. The long quarrel between philosophy and religion appeared happily terminated by a matrimonial alliance between the two great houses, and Hegelianism was saluted as a child of promise, in whose name a new world was inaugurated, where wolves and lambs would dwell together, while leopards reposed by the side of kids. The Wisdom of the World, that haughty pagan dame, humbly submitted to baptism, and repeated a confession of Christian faith; while faith on its side, decreed to her in attestation of sound Christianity, and warmly recommended her to the fraternal welcome of the Churches. Then might you see youthful theology courageously play with the serpent of doubt, and present to it head and bosom, certain that it possessed the magic formula which could charm its old enemy at pleasure; and even in the circles of a rigorous orthodoxy manœuvres were effected and arms brandished, directly borrowed from the exercise-grounds and arsenals of philosophy.”

With these words of irony, cutting to the quick, did Strauss, in 1840, commence his famous system of Dogma,* the complement of his *Leben Jesu* (Life of Christ) which was intended by its author to complete the ruin of the ancient edifice, whose base, in his opinion, he had taken away. We must, with him, acknowledge that the illusions, at the moment at which he spoke, were great. Hegelianism was victorious all along the line. It was the time when Gabler, Göschel, Rosenkrantz, "the Evangelical Gazette" itself, as well as Bruno Bauer, (all so much changed since!) enthusiastically chanted the Hegelian incantation to the sound of sacred organs, crushing with their orthodox disdain poor old rationalism, which tottered to its grave, and little thought that many of its devout despisers would soon find even it much too religious and Christian. I don't know whether in the history of human thought you can find an intellectual intoxication similar to that, which had then taken possession of a host of eminent persons, who plunged delightedly into the heady vapours of the new speculation. Old Mother Church and Science gave each other the kiss of peace. Alas! the pleasing harmony was not of long duration. Many remember what a crash of thunder broke forth when Strauss (a boon companion with a cold head, who had drunk the new wine to profusion, but had not for a moment lost his balance) thought proper to tear from the goddess of the moment her orthodox masque, and to turn against even the foundations of the sanctuary, the complicated machines, with which it had been surrounded as by *chevreaux de frise*, on which the charges of criticism and common sense were in all time to come to spend their force in vain.

* Die Christliche Glaubenslehre in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung und im kampf mit der modernen Wissenschaft; dargestellt von Dr. F. Strauss, 1840-41; London: NUTT, 270, Strand.

Sunt lacrymae rerum; one might almost weep over the disappointment. Though we even admit that the dismay was deserved, we cannot avoid a certain sadness of feeling at the sight of enthusiastic illusions dispelled by the inexorable course of events and of logical necessity. Strauss himself, when he traced the lines we have cited above, knew that a few years afterwards he in his turn would pass for a laggard, and his own doctrine would be dubbed with the offensive name of "A Sermon;" which appeared to him humiliating for a work of scientific pretensions.

After the philosophic inebrity came prostration. It is before all to the orgies of Hegelian speculation, that the orthodox reaction owed its triumphs in the last few years. Among the spirits who did not bend before its haughty menaces, a good number took a deep disgust for the extravagant idealism with which the age had saturated them, and threw themselves their whole length along in the ruts of a brutal and often cynical materialism. In intellectual matters, Germany carries everything to extremes, and this is the reason why it is so instructive.

Among the books of a certain real value, fit to shew the theologian who is beginning to study the relations of religion and science, at what point the question now stands, the *Glaubenslehre of Strauss* is specially instructive. Before this work appeared, it might be imagined that Strauss would compensate by the riches of Christian ideas, for what he took from historical Christianity. A fond illusion certainly, but a possible one. His *Dogmatik* came forth, the Church stopped payment as its author predicted; and if its ruthless creditor did not push the matter to a bankruptcy, his followers did; and in truth no other result was possible in a concern, whose books were so badly kept.

The method which Strauss applied to the old dogmas was,

as might be expected, learned and rigorous. His object was to show that each of those dogmas had run its historical race, and given forth all it contained. Armed with the Hegelian principle, that an idea unfolds its consequences along the line of history until its substance is run out, he described each of the Christian dogmas in its rudiments, its formation, its growth, its apogee, and its decline. The germs of its decline might already be discovered in the conditions in which its apogee was reached. At the end of all the chapters you regularly came to the epitaph of the worn out dogma—which was nothing else but an abstract shade of its former self, colourless, hard and dry as a stone, the only durable precipitate of the tumultuous mixture of the dogmatic notions of the past. Naturally this wreck was always an Hegelian apothegm.

After all Strauss has rendered great services. When a metaphysical speculation, great in itself and singularly seductive for men of strong minds, adds to that powerful *prestige*, the *prestige* of an apparent harmony with the inmost wants of the conscience, and the heart, then the ideal seems attained and the name of absolute truth is on the point of being pronounced. And this is always to be regretted. As long as humanity shall see unroll before it the long future, which every thing yet concurs to promise, the pretensions of closing the labours of thought will always be suspicious. If we were compelled to allow it, we must exchange our western love of progress for Chinese immoveability, and condemn ourselves to sail in search of no more new lands. Hegelianism will always remain one of the most imposing monuments of intelligence and its influence on the direction of the human mind will never cease to be felt. Henceforth the thinker lacks something who has not strengthened himself in the robust exercises of that gymnasium. But he would also lack much were he

not able to give himself an account why he did not remain there. Hegel did not like criticism. A massive logician, an extreme generaliser, he rolled the huge block of his speculative dialectics over the timid objections of experience and of history. In the disdainful contempt with which he acted, may he not have felt a presentiment that in the end the gnats would kill the lion whom they tormented? This, however, is certain, namely, that the historical tendency, that which seeks in the study of man and in the history of the race, the true explanation of man's destiny; this tendency, which by its very nature is critical, has not been able to breathe at its ease in the Hegelian corslet of iron. Inspired by the sentiment of the general harmony of things, bringing into relief, not only generalities, but also individualities in their positive reality, it knew not how always to bend to a system which outrages the universal aspirations of the human mind, and which swallows up individuals in their several species. Without in any way renouncing the idealism which ought always to be the end and the vivifying salt of man's researches, the historical tendency refuses to quit the solid ground of reality and experience. Strauss then has himself accomplished an excellent criticism of the philosophy which he adored, in showing, with unrelenting rigour, how much, or rather how little, of the grand historical development of religious and Christian thought his system allowed to remain.

Rigidly brought back to its own true religious contents, Hegelianism is made a bankrupt at the suit of human nature.

We desire to give some precision to these too general considerations, by showing their application to one of the capital points of religious thought, as it is treated in the works of Strauss, of which we have spoken. By this specimen, those of our readers to whom this work is not known, will be able to form some idea of the whole. Indeed, the same point of

view and the same method pervade the entire volumns. In consequence the system if unstitched in one part must fall to pieces in all.

The chapter which we take for our subject corresponds to that which, in an ordinary system of divinity, would be entitled "On Eschatology," or "The Final Issues." With Strauss, this subject resolves itself into this Hegelian idea:—"the temporary appearance of the divine, according to the moment of the future, as a religious hope." This, if it is put into less obscure terms, may mean that the divine life, manifesting itself in man, limited as to his individual life, produces the sentiment, the notion of immortality. But this immortality has nothing in reserve for the individual who is the negative, transitory, fundamentally false element, the mere form, destined to be broken in pieces in passing into the universal, and so becoming divine. In other words, Strauss, in the name of Hegelianism, rigorously deduced in its consequences, denies all conscious and personal survival of the individual after the death of the body. It is only the human race which is divine and immortal.

The following is the way in which he announces (p. 100) the object which he purposes, in this the last part of his Treatise; "From the concrete tissue of the biblical and ecclesiastical traditions, namely: the return of the Messiah, the resurrection of the body, the final judgement, paradise and hell; modern reflexion has drawn the abstract thread of its doctrine of immortality, to attach thereto the I (the individual) above the dreaded abyss of annihilation. We shall follow this course. We shall describe the formation and the decomposition of the eschatology of the church, so as to ascertain what the thread of the modern belief in immortality may continue to be."

In an early paragraph, accordingly, the author sums up

the biblical eschatology, on which the church has built its own. He calls to mind how the worthies of the Old Testament, as well as all those of the primitive ages, foresaw after death only a vague state of sleep, alike without joy and grief, and equally without any return to life; and confined their expectation of divine recompense to the course of their actual existence on earth. It was in the mind of the Hebrews that the first rudimental notion of a future resurrection of the dead sprang into existence, in the depths of Sheol, the hidden dark repository of the shades of the departed. The notion was of late origin; the first trace of the belief of a resurrection is found in the book of Daniel (xii. 2 seq.) The second book of Maccabees shows us how popular the belief became among the Jews, and how the idea of a distributive remuneration connected itself immediately therewith. This resurrection, according to the ancient shemitic idea of life, namely, as having its source in the blood (Gen. ix. 4.) must of necessity be that of the body. On this point the Alexandrian Judaism sharply distinguished itself from the Palestinian, in this manner: regarding the body as the prison of the spirit, it saw in the spirit the real factor of life, and in consequence considered death as a deliverance. In the age of Christ, the Pharisees appeared to have professed the Palestinian, or strictly Jewish, doctrine, while the Essenians approached the Alexandrine, and the Sadducees denied both. At the same time, Pharisaism seems to have admitted a provisional retribution in Sheol or Hades, anteriorly to the final resurrection.

The New Testament only contains the eschatological doctrine of the Pharisees, though we are not able to refer to one and the same body all the declarations which it contains. We must, however, specify the teachings of Jesus respecting the cessation of sexual distinctions and the analogy of the future state with that of the angels, together with the theory

of Paul respecting the relation of the spiritual body with the animal one—which is to the former what the grain is to the fully blown plant. For the rest, all the New Testament is written in the expectation of the end of the world, of the immediate resurrection of the dead, and of the judgment to be pronounced on the assembled nations by the triumphant Christ. Paul, not less than the Apocalypse, believes in the trumpet which was ere long to sound. The book of Revelation positively teaches the reign of a thousand years (the Millenium) and puts within a Christian frame the entire picture of the Rabbinical eschatology. Rewards and punishments, alike everlasting, are reserved respectively for the righteous and the wicked; and Strauss denies all logical value to the proofs alleged to support the thesis of a final universal restoration. As shewing the germ of a discordance, under which the dogma of the church will continually suffer, the fact deserves note, that the New Testament oscillates between the two ideas of a judgment which immediately follows death, fixing for ever the destiny of the individual, and of another judgment at the end of time, which appears superfluous, the moment the first is received as a reality.

Here then is the base of the eschatological doctrine of the Church. The earliest centuries of the Christian era shows us that Christian thought decidedly rejects the old shemitic idea of the unconscious sleep between death and the general resurrection. An endeavour has been made to unite the two conceptions. It is said that all souls go into sheol or hades, and that hades is divided into two regions—one, hell, which receives the impious; the other, Abraham's bosom, which opens its gates to the righteous exclusively. The latter is commonly distinguished from paradise—a celestial locality, to which the martyrs only have access before the resurrection and the final judgment. It is also believed that Christ

having descended into hell, conducted thence into paradise the just men of the ancient covenant, and the door which he opened, (the key of which he confided to Peter) allowed a number of saints and monks to pass afterwards.

During the middle ages, and in the degree in which the Church was removed from Christian antiquity, the notion of sheol disappeared more and more, and the idea got established that the souls of the deceased were, immediately on death, transported according to their deserts, to either heaven or hell. A Pope (John xxii) incurred the suspicion even of heresy because he maintained that the elect, now dead, do not yet enjoy the full vision of God. This rendered still more vague the idea to be formed of the last judgment; and that the more because it was admitted that, according to the old system, the blessed and the cursed are able to behold one another; so that the last judgment was only a perfectly superfluous proclamation of that which was already universally known. Thus the judgment which follows death insensibly absorbs the last judgment, and the immortality of the soul absorbs as insensibly the resurrection of the body.

The last absorption, however, was long in coming. The doctrine of the Fathers, of the scholars of the middle ages, of the Protestant doctors, constantly supposes that the actual body will rise quite entire. And Strauss giggles over all the two-sided conceptions which may be gleaned on the field of the history of Church Doctrines, from that which defined the number of hairs which would be restored to the bald, to the opinion which promised to all the same height of person as was that of Christ, according to a gross misinterpretation of Ephesians iv., 31. In particular, the resurrection of the entrails gave the doctors of the Church a thread to twist and untwist, and Saint Thomas considered it his duty to make their contents consist of perfumed essences. Moreover,

inextricable difficulties constantly arose from the idea of so many organs to be restored to the dead which would be of no service. The Fathers and the scholastic doctors were not less embarrassed as to men mutilated by wild beasts, or, a yet more thorny matter, devoured by other men. Augustin restored the litigated flesh to its original proprietor, and held that God would, by a creative act, supply what was lacking to the actual tenant. Another cause of perplexity arose from the purely incorporeal qualities which were ascribed to resuscitated bodies,—such as immutability, insensibility, omnipresence. Scarcely was the conclusion avoided that bodies which were invisible, impalpable, unlimited, in either time or space, were no longer bodies.

The spiritualistic opposition to the resurrection of the body dates far back in the church. The New Testament touches some portion of it, and the Gnostics openly proclaimed the antagonism. Origen took a middle path, keeping close to the teachings of Paul in 1 Corinthians xv., 36 seq. As a true Platonian, he presumed that the future body would be an ethereal body, round in form, so that Justinian thought it his duty to anathematise those who hold that the raised bodies would not be able to stand upright. Scotus Erigena went so far as to deny all form to bodies in the next world. At the same time, these are only insulated attempts, calling forth no great response in the church. The philosophy of Descartes introduced a new set of conceptions. Every idea of a proper resurrection was set aside, and the eighteenth century spoke of only the immortality of the soul. But since by reflexion men found that a spirit without body could not have either true life or true consciousness, they admitted that the defunct soul might take a new body, but in another manner, and by using different substances to those which compose our present bodies. But who or what guarantees the

identity of conscience? An ethereal body, intermediate in this life between the soul and the material body, as proposed by Priestley,* Jung Stilling, Eschenmayer, and which should accompany the soul to the other world? How many unfounded hypotheses! and how far are we from the statements of the New Testament and of the ancient church! Besides, either this ethereal body is a product of the material body, and the latter dissolving, its product vanishes; or it is its producer, and the vanishing of the material body is the evident proof that its producer has equally vanished.†

It is in vain that in our times Göschel and Weisse have endeavoured to give an Hegelian sense to the resurrection. Marheineke and Blasche have proclaimed the sole idea which can be at one with modern speculation, namely, the resurrection is an eternal fact; it is man's consciousness in the process of formation, and the general resurrection is the universal consciousness coming to itself in the individual. Whether the individual continues to subsist or disappears what matters? It is not he that is to become eternal, and others will come to take his place.

Another important element of the ancient eschatology, the wreck of which has been effected, is the great drama which of old filled so many Christian souls with the prospect

* I do not know what authority Strauss had for ascribing to Priestley this gauze-work intermediary between the soul and the body; but I do know that in the ninth section of Priestley's "Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit" the author distinctly disavows, and undertakes to confute the very idea in opposition to Wollaston and Hartley. See Rutt's Edition of Priestley's Works, vol 14, p. 276 seq.

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† The author of this critique appends to this the following note: "Doubtless the hypothesis which Strauss opposes is not proved. But his dilemma does not hit the mark. In the first place, it is possible that the dissolution of the body, as of the grain, may have its product, its fruit; in the second, it is possible that the productive principle of the body may be called to other developments, and let its first organism fall."

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of its awful scenes—the end and the renewal of the world. The general belief formerly was that all things would be dissolved by fire, and that from the conflagration a new world would arise. The fathers and the scholastic divines indulged thereon in the same extravagant reveries as those with which they had treated the theme of the resurrection of the body. There resulted a future world which was the re-production of the present one, without having any of its properties. Then, all this eschatology moved within the circle of the astronomical notions of antiquity. No hesitation was felt in holding that the heavenly bodies would also sink in the great cataclysm. Why indeed should they remain? They had no longer anything on which to shine. But after the teachings of Copernicus amendments could not be avoided. Some authorities stopped with the destruction of the solar system; others carried their admissions no further than that of our own planet. The latter fancied that they had support in certain astronomical and geological phenomena. But how would it be with the burnt up earth? Michaelis hoped that the fire might spare some fertile region. No doubt, in a speculative point of view, our earth, which had a beginning, must come to an end; for a being which, having a commencement, does not cease to be, would augment the sum total of being in the universe—a contradictory idea. But referred to this revolution of the planetary orbs—one moment in the ten thousand moments of the eternal transition—the end of the world has no longer the least relation with our individual destiny; men in future live on without thinking of it; and the true end of the world, the true philosophic dogma, consists in the feeling that the old world of appearances and tumultuous passions is come to an end for him who knows how to rise to the notion of the absolute unity, immanent in the multiplicity of things.

A last chapter is appropriated to what may be called the end of the end of the dogmatists, that is, the last judgment and salvation, with its correlative damnation. All the orthodox fathers and the protestant doctors always represented the last judgment in the way in which it is described in the New Testament—as an outward event, and the tribunal of Christ, as being set up after the manner of earthly tribunals in courts of justice. Origen and some other authorities, however, inclined to the opinion that the great assize would be rather an internal event, the great crisis of conscience. Nevertheless, the assembling of all men in one place to be judged exteriorly remained intact. The real meaning of this dogma was unveiled, when at last critics learned that the judgment of the world is nothing else than its history, in which God's spirit continually returns to separate the true from the false, and the good from the bad. But then, this continual judgment, from the fact of its being continual, excluded the idea of the last judgment.

The same materialism which characterised all the primitive eschatology appears in the notions entertained of the fate of the elect and the reprobate. Nevertheless, from the time of Origen, chiliasm, so general before, took a step back, and a very arbitrary notion assumed a place among the received ideas. Whilst "the worm which dieth not" was considered a pure symbol, they took the eternal *flames* as literal, and by a curious association, "the outer *darkness*." Origen was very roughly handled for having assimilated them to the torments of a guilty conscience. "The beatific vision," or the vision of God, most generally comprised what was thought of the felicity of the elect, and that vision ordinarily consisted in a perfect knowledge of God—the true paradise of the theologians. The joys and the pains of the other world were absolute, without interchange, without end. But

then the question came up how a perpetual joy could be experienced in the long run, since habit dulls all joys, and a finite being can taste of joys only on the supposition of a desire which is not immediately satisfied. Other difficulties arose as to the absolute separation of the elect and the reprobate. After all, the former owed their perfect happiness only to their entire separation from the latter; the solidarity of the human race is broken asunder with all the good effects of which it is the indispensable condition; and it was impossible not to connect the weal of the elect with a marked diminution of the bases of moral progress. It was even necessary to ascribe to them a perfect selfishness in regard to their former brethren. For, according to the old dogma, the elect and the reprobate could contemplate the one the other, and the former were required by the system to take pleasure in witnessing the rigorous execution of the divine justice on the latter. Origen was a great heretic, but a noble character, when he laid it down that Christ himself could not be completely happy until the last sinner should have been restored to peace. It was only at a modern date that the idea of the same doctor was revived, as to an eternal progress, in opposition to the old notion, which would have it that the beatitude of the elect was immediately full and consummate. Only it must have been observed that progress necessarily supposes discontent with the present, a desire to quit the present, and an effort to stand some steps in advance. Consequently the idea of beatitude and the idea of progress are incompatible.*

The origin of the Catholic dogma of purgatory consists

* Here the hypercriticism of Strauss goes beyond the truth by exaggerating it. It is not less true that a finite being is always happy in making progress, whatever the theoretical conditions of progress; and happiness being nothing else than the development of life, the beatitude of a finite being necessarily consists in the constant development of his aptitudes. In such a case, present imperfection is absorbed in the prospect of perfection.

in the transference into the other world of the fire which, according to 1 Corinthians, iii., 13, is to try every man's work, and which the ancient church in general understood of our present earthly trials. Augustin did not see why such a fire should not exist on the other side of the tomb as well as on this. By little and little the fire of the other side absorbed the fire of this side, and, moreover, was understood in a very material sense. Protestantism, relying on scripture, and man's conscience, revolted at the numerous absurdities therewith connected, categorically denied every kind of purgatory, but was somewhat in trouble to explain how the soul, always in reality affected with sin, though ideally justified, came before Christ in a purified condition.

The eternity of hell torments, proclaimed by orthodox theology, whether Catholic or Protestant, has never ceased to grieve the human heart. Origen denied it. Jerome exempted bad Christians from the penalty, while he held it firm against good Pagans. At a later day, under the impression that it is nonsense to speak of endless penalties apart from equally endless transgressions, as their cause, a tendency was manifested to identify eternal punishment with eternal sin (Leibnitz). Joined to the admission of free will, this belief brought that of the hypothetical eternity of punishment. Man shall be wretched as long as he sins, and, besides, he will be eternally inferior to those who have gone before him in the good way. But, besides that, this was not at all the meaning of the scriptural declarations, and of the dogmas of the church, who could declare that, as it is seen in this state, those who worked only the last hour might not overtake those who began to work early in the morning? What a mechanical idea of the mind must the defenders of this view have had!

This is the reason why the final restoration of all things, already taught by Origen, advantageously took the place of

this eternal mechanism. At the end of time there re-appeared then great $A=A$, with its monstrous monotony, so thoroughly, that Origen, not being able to endure the idea, admits for spiritual beings, an unlimited series of moral falls, the causes of successive worlds, the destiny of which was to be analogous to that of the present world. In our days, Nietzsche proclaimed the possibility, Schleiermacher, the firm hope of a final restoration. But sentimental platitude has taken from this hope its early charm, without preserving to it the grandeur it drew from the bold speculations of Origen. The Result: all these ideas of future happiness and woe are only abstractions, and it is much better to express them in their crudity, as did the ancient church, than to give them an appearance of reality by arbitrary representations. It is, in actual reality, that we are to find hell and heaven. Not the good, but goodness is eternal; damnation is the pure negative of badness; the restoration of the damned is badness negated by goodness, but ever coming forth out of that negation.

If the reader has attentively followed this critical history of the doctrine of "The Last Events," he will have apprehended its method, and what I may call its constant rhythm. On each of the points raised you obtain at the end of the development what you denied at the beginning. At present, we believe in an immediate conscious immortality; which is precisely the opposite of that belief in the primeval Sheol, on which the different stages of the doctrine built themselves. In respect to immortality; we expect only that of the soul, and without much repugnance we resign our mortal remains to the four elements. This is an idea completely opposed to that of the ancient belief in the resurrection of the body. We have no longer any notion of what the end of the world can have to do with our eternal destiny, while, with the first Christians, the two ideas were closely connected together, being necessary

each to each. And, as a faithful disciple of Hegel, Strauss acts in such a way as to show that the contradiction which is as clear as day, if you fix your sight on the two ends of the chain, insensibly comes into view in the proportion in which the later links follow the former. From thesis to antithesis, each calling forth the other, you go all round the circumference, and at the moment of your arrival, you perceive that you are at the point diametrically opposite to that at which you started. Or it is like a sun-beam decomposed by a prism; you may pass from the violet to the red through a number of intermediate shades, each of which is so like its two neighbouring shades that you can scarcely distinguish them.

The eschatological idea is then exhausted. In future it has nothing more to yield. Its *debris* are three or four speculative consolations which we have indicated as we came along: the continual return of the universal consciousness to itself: the end of the world already real for him who by reason unites himself to the eternal unity, the judgment of history, and the negation of badness by goodness.

And after this for Strauss to reproach modern theology with feeding on abstractions!

If I had the honour to meet that man whom I must admire for his fine talents and respect for his misfortunes, I should be curious to learn from him if his ideas on this point are still the same. It is said that he does not like to converse on theological questions, and that he wishes he had never occupied himself with them. Nevertheless, I would venture to ask him whether the beatitude he promises to the Hegelian disciple is not at least as monotonous as that of the "plump-cheeked angels seen in Catholic paintings." What a notion! to be condemned, in order that you may satisfy your spiritual thirst, to eternally contemplate Moloch as, eternally revolving about himself, he throws up his syllogisms in the eternal mirror

by which he is surrounded. For myself, I should prefer the paradise of the old Puritans, who hoped to pass eternity in singing psalms.

The fealty with which Hegelianism identifies its abstract generalisations with real beings, and not things, is something amazing. There are no living beings, there is life; no minds, but mind. Hegelianism is a continual personification of metaphysical categories. This fact has been its death. By this it has made rebound, in all its vigour, the spring, whose mighty force it has disowned; I mean human nature, which is individualist, fond of realities, impatient of abstractions. Doubtless the history of the eschatological doctrine accomplishes its own criticism, as does the history of every dogma; for, not without reason, does the human mind modify its religious representations. One after the other it breaks the forms which it made as receptacles of a deposit which it is so far from losing that it understands the said deposit the better in the degree in which it better understands the forms with which it is surrounded. But from the fact that the final form is contrary to the initial one, does it follow that the substance which has passed through all the intermediate modifications, is reduced to zero, according to the argument of the chapter of which we have given an analysis? Is it inevitable that the sublime hope of the religious man, declaring that death is not a curtain behind which lies a boundless sphere of darkness, should terminate in those formulas of stone, which destroy the race in destroying each individual in turn? And is it not instructive that we have the right to reproach the best accredited supporter of modern unbelief with the same faults for which we blame the rigorous orthodox,—that is with confounding the form of dogma with their substance?

For example, let us take the dogmatic evolution to which

the method of the famous teacher applies in the most specious manner, that which leads from the total resurrection of the actual body, coming forth cap-a-pie from the bowels of the earth at the end of time, which, we say, leads from that conception to our present hope of immortality. Evidently a palpable contradiction exists between the two; and we may even declare that there is not a single point of coincidence between this representation and that. But after all, on what does the contradiction fall? Solely on the different forms, given in different ages, to one and the same thing—the sentiment that our individual destiny passes beyond the dissolution of the body. As to the sentiment itself, it is found as entire, as vigorous (and even more definitely apprehended) at the extremity of the chain, as at its beginning. In good logic this would be a strong presumption in its favour. That must be something of a very solid nature, which lives on through modifications so remarkable, and we ought rather to admire the identity of the substance, which appears so visible in two forms so contrary to each other.

I./ In fact, the law-suit which we carry on against this application of the Hegelian dialectics, we might turn against Hegelianism itself. It is gnawed to death by abstractions. The idea which forms the centre of the system, that of *becoming*, or the state of passing from the subject to the object, this constant development in reality consist of mere phantoms. I think J. H. Fichte was the first to bring into view this weak side of the system. In order that this transition should be a reality, there ought of necessity to be some permanent element, some identical thing, which extends through all the transformations. This, truly speaking, would be the object which becomes or passes on, modifying itself continually by its relations with other things, but never losing its own essential reality. Without this the wheel lacks an axle-tree; the

metamorphoses take place without a living soul, and you have nothing except a mechanical succession of forms having no internal relations, and building themselves the one upon the other. In such a case there is no *becoming*, for nothing becomes; there is no transition, for nothing passes over. Strauss, in reducing to zero, the evolutions of religious thought in regard to a conscious and personal immortality, has disowned this perpetual element which, nevertheless, is the soul of the movement; by this element I mean the not only general but individual tendency of each of us towards the infinite,—a tendency to which man has always paid obedience, since man has always been religious, and of which belief in a future life, under whatever forms it makes its appearance, is only a perfectly natural prolongation. If ever the Hegelian dogmas could be embodied in a traditional doctrine, the world would then see human nature protest against the system by a host of heresies.

Moreover, Strauss himself, is well aware that on this point he has not completely realised his programme. By an exception, he adds to his eschatological chapter an appendix, specially devoted to the criticism of modern theories of immortality. He perceives that there is yet a very solid ring, by which the consciousness of the present generation links itself to the chain of ancient hope. In its turn we must examine this supplement.

The author begins by describing, with his biting irony, that which may be the most sacred hope of a religious trust, quite as well as the selfish calculations of a superstitious one. He pretends that in these days Christians would allow their God and their Christ to be taken from them rather than their survival beyond the tomb. Their *Credo* comes to this, that after the criticism applied by Kant to the old beliefs, these three objects remain—God, liberty, and immortality, and that

the greatest of them is immortality. In this fond hope, modern sentimentalism dreams its dream of "meeting again in another and a better world," which flourish in so many funereal inscriptions, so many letters of condolence, so many sermons, so many romances. Only they always take care to leave out what would happen should one of the two, who are to meet again, be reserved for the infernal regions, while the other is admitted to the celestial. When Christ spoke of the "many mansions of his Father's house," (John xiv. 2.) the credulous fancy that he may have had in view the suns, and the nebulae of the modern astronomy. They thus fabricate for themselves a paradise of tourists, as of old there was a paradise of beadles. In a word, in the midst of the ruins of all the ancient eschatology, the individual I has deluded itself with the notion of remaining on its legs, and of preserving out of its own monstrous egotism what, and only what, it pleased. It is just, that Richter made a frank and simple negation of a future personal life succeed the silence of Hegel and of his earliest disciples, and dismissed the immortal I to sleep with the ancient divinities which he had so scornfully broken in pieces. The mystic obscurities of the Hegelians of the right, Weisse, Göschel, &c., could not prevent Richter having logic on his side; and the future will more and more confirm the alliance. It is after a deluge of sarcasms of this nature that the pitiless critic passes on to the proofs commonly advanced in behalf of immortality.

The most popular of these proofs is the sentiment of a necessary moral retribution. If the dead do not outlive their bodies "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." It is the fear of future punishment and the hope of future reward, it is these alone, which can sustain us in the struggle against evil. Spinoza first had the honour of refuting this selfish utilitarianism, by showing that good ought always to be done for the

love of good, and of God, and that salvation can consist in nothing else than sanctity itself. Good being conformed to the true nature of man, both is and produces happiness. Calvin himself, in one of his better moments, said that "it sufficed to reflect on the paternal goodness of God, even were there no hell, to have more horror at the idea of offending him than at the idea of suffering the worst kind of death." In a word, he who needs a future recompense to make him virtuous, is only on the steps of the temple of virtue; he is not morally ripe, and has no right to handle the question. If we do good to get good our good is no longer good, and it matters little whether the reward is placed on this side the grave or that. Self-interest is in either case the real motive.

Setting aside the unreasonable raillery with which Strauss has tried to season his reasoning, which is truly close and vigorous, I cannot help, I avow, being of his opinion when he exposes the weak, and not very moral, side of the vulgar argument. At the bottom, the Protestant doctrine which assigns to us the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ as the sole ground of sanctification, opposing, meanwhile, every idea of human merit,—has it not directed men's minds towards a more just idea of the essence of morality? To do good solely through love to God—is this logically different from doing good because you love good, and because you are happy in doing that which you love to do? And yet whence comes the vivid sentiment shared by men of the most distinguished sanctity, that the hope of happiness to come compensates for the bitterness of the present, and powerfully encourages him who wrestles with temptation? Certainly I admire Spinoza greatly; I admire his genius and his character. Nevertheless, I cannot put him on the same level as Paul, much less on the same level as Jesus. I fear finding at the bottom of the solitary of the Hague a certain speculative quietism, the

majesty of which is imposing but the egotism distressing. Spinoza cannot be my ideal. He is too fond of giving his thought repose, when fatigued with deep meditation, in watching flies and spiders in their conflicts. Spinoza can suffer for truth. His resignation has something antique in it, which commands my respect, without, however, moving me strongly. I prefer, I must prefer, the Messiah, who places on the common table the cup in which he has for the last time drunk the juice of the vine, and declares to his associates, with a moved voice and an inspired countenance, that he will drink it with them, after a new manner, in the Kingdom of God. In a word, stoical resignation is great, but greater still is eternal hope. Besides, is it difficult to find the reconciliation between the strictly moral point of view, which demands good done for good, God worshipped for God, without any interested motive, and confidence in a better life to come? What, if in the future life as in the present, good is always true happiness, but with this difference, that this happiness, quite real on earth as in heaven, has no longer to suffer from the bitter drug of contradictions, iniquities, and griefs of this poor world? If consequently I do good, not with reference to a reward external to good, but in the assurance that good is my destiny, my true and imperishable nature, and that to succumb to the temptations of sin is to refuse the sole true happiness, which is sanctity; can there be here any question of an interested motive? Or do we not rather find in this point of view the harmony of moral obligation on the one side, and the desire of happiness inherent in every living thing on the other. Whether we think of the future or of the present life, good is never loved or sought except for itself. I, in my turn, may express my surprise that so able a reasoner as Strauss has passed over this view of the question in silence. Perhaps he would say that, put thus, it is indifferent to the problem

with which he is occupied; that the identity of true happiness and moral good being granted, there is not the least reason why holiness, which is unhappy here, should be happy hereafter. But again, would he be deceived, or at least he would forget that then we are on the road to the rational transformation of the popular argument. Happiness to any living creature whatever, can be nothing else than the normal development of life, or, which is tantamount, the realisation of its destiny. Consequently, every living creature ought to find happiness in attaining the full realisation of its normal life. At present the higher destiny of man, which is sanctity, is necessarily in conflict with the conditions of his terrestrial existence, and this conflict unavoidably produces sufferings on the part of the just. Therefore, either nature, which, according to Hegel and Strauss, is logic, and which must be logic for every one who believes in God,—either nature flatly contradicts herself, or the sufferings of sanctity are the conditions of its emancipation in the prospect of a state of things more favourable to its realisation. There, as every where else, our higher life has a painful parturition for its antecedent.

At present there is something that we have a right to require from those who deny a personal immortality, I mean the final abandonment of accusation of egotism, of a puerile attachment to life, of a utilitarian morality, which they are continually directing against its defenders. After all, I do not know that the greatest saints are on the side of those by whom the doctrine is denied, and it is a fact to be regretted that the denial, whether it be philosophical or the reverse, often serves as an excuse, or a pretext for the grossest materialism. It is thus possible to throw and throw back imputations for a long time without advancing the question one step. The only thing to be done is to combat that view which makes virtue a bill of exchange drawn on eternity

but we have just seen that the problem to be solved is at the bottom very independent of so peurile a calculation. Besides, if it is absurd to declare a thing true because it smiles on our secret desires, it is not less so, to conclude from that coincidence that it is false. Because temperance is the best safeguard of my health, and in consequence accords with my interests properly understood, I am not to conclude that I am wrong in being temperate. If experience proves that frankness and fidelity, in spite of the enemies they call forth, are the best means of making true friends, that is no reason why I should turn traitor or trickster. Why wish to remonstrate with nature? The desire of happiness is inseparable from life; moral obligation, from conscience. Leave them to direct themselves towards the mysterious point where the finger of God has fixed their meeting. Finally, I am fully justified in declaring that, in the name of certain metaphysical formulas, to extinguish the most radiant hope that can illumine the soul, a hope which colours life and death with joyous splendour, which authorises me never to acquiesce in moral imperfection, to appeal from every unrighteous deed, to console all severe griefs, to dry the most scorching tears, to murmur to every one I love, the sweet "We shall meet again"—even though Strauss should accuse us of sentimentality—*homo sum*, I am a man, and I therefore say that this is one of those prospects which ought not to be renounced until it can no longer be retained honourably.

I am well aware that such is his pretension. To him the belief in personal immortality appears condemned by philosophic reflexion. Nevertheless in the first part of his refutation I have seen nothing like victory. I have seen only reasons for modifying the ordinarily received form of a very popular argument; and, what does not surprise me, that modification has for its result—to change the argument into

a particular application of the great principle at which we are coming, and against which Strauss appears to have in vain directed the strokes of his keen dialectics.

I wish to say something on the teleological argument which is at bottom the only convincing one, or at least which gives a positive value to the arguments of detail which are sometimes unwisely presented apart from their common principle. It is not difficult to see that if the individual destiny of each of us surpasses death, no one of us is finished, no one has completely realised his existence before death. By the same reason, from the experimental fact that no man is finished before death, we are justified to conclude that all are destined to surpass death. If now it appears that the individual carries in himself an inexhaustible mine of possible developments, aptitudes, and tendencies aiming at the infinite, we are bound to affirm not only the survival after death, but personal immortality. Let us add that it is only another form, the religious form, of the argument, to say that man is loved of God, attracted of God, and is intended fully to realise God's image; which being absolutely perfect, will never be absolutely realised. A little reflexion will suffice to persuade all our readers that these two arguments are fundamentally the same. To say that man is destined to ascend eternally toward God, and to say that God eternally draws man upward to himself, is to express one and the same truth.

Before Strauss' *Dogmatik* appeared, this teleological proof had been expounded by J. H. Fichte, one of those post-Hege-
I./
 lian philosophers, who, while owing much to the master, felt the necessity of going beyond his system. In what way does Strauss reply to Fichte? I am sorry to say he replies by a burlesque. "To convince us of the falseness of such reasoning," he says, "it is sufficient to consider every log of wood we burn at Christmas, and every bit of caviare we swallow; for

in the latter there was an aptitude to become a thousand fishes, and in the former a tendency to rise into a magnificent pine; now neither the one nor the other reaches its development; yet we do not consider it necessary to postulate for them a future life. Clever and ridiculous doubtless; and having said this we have said all. The comparison in no way proves that the *normal development of man* does not surpass the dissolution of the body, for, in the natural state, the young pine becomes something else than a fagot, and the eggs of caviare do not of themselves enter the stomach of *gourmands*. The comparison could mean something, only in the case that beings, at once free and superior to man were able for their own good, suddenly to put a stop to their development. Now this cannot be admitted on the side of Strauss, and in a more general point of view, it is evident that man being in creation the being who enters into conscious personal and direct relations with God, is also the last word of creation, the repose of the creator, and that there is nothing between him and God, nothing, I say, but his own ascent to God. The individual may have elder brothers, predecessors, but not destroyers. If, as analogy indicates, the heavenly bodies also are the abode of spiritual beings, whatever difference there may be between them and us, as to physical conformation, they are nevertheless of the same race as ourselves, and do not constitute another kingdom. Without the least inconvenience, Strauss might have left at rest the logs, and the eggs of caviare. He is so much aware of this that he suddenly returns to the minor branch of his syllogism: every being realises his aptitude; the aptitude of man is infinite; in consequence he must live for ever. Whence is it known, he ask, that the aptitude of man is infinite? that the moment never comes when nothing new can come forth from the hidden depths of his being? Certainly, it is not from experience. On the contrary, that shows us

that each man attains a *maximum* of physical and intellectual life, after which decay sets in on both. At eighty years of age a Goethe has survived himself. Again a very strange argument! Might not as much be said of the sleep of each day, the need of which forces itself on the most active man, paralysing all his faculties? Yet who ever fancied that his friend had finished the task which he had the power to accomplish because sleep compelled an interruption of it? It is painful to hear Strauss pretend that a man may believe himself to have truly reached a limit which he can never pass. He might in his turn deserve a little raillery, when he gravely asks, "Of what further development of soul was Spinoza capable?" O pantheistic feticism! Had he only the development which would have allowed him to tell us what constitutes the unity of thought and space; that alone would have been worth living for.

The question is not, if a man struck with decrepitude shows, in that condition, the signs of an ulterior development. It is to know, if man in his full maturity, ever completely realises his ideal, is what he feels himself capable of being, draws from himself all he is conscious he could produce. And it is the intellectual *élite* of human kind, its great religious geniuses; poets, artists, prophets, saints; the Son of Man himself, who replies in the negative, and who ask of God a yet higher glory. Physical decrepitude, and its more or less necessary consequence, the darkening of the mind, remains a fact which has to be explained, but which does not destroy the former fact; already we can conceive that it represents on a larger scale, on a wider rhythm, what the phenomenon of sleep brings with it each day. The old man, very advanced in years, is singularly like a man who dreams.

The species, Strauss will say, is the immortal; it is the species which possesses the infinite, inexhaustible aptitude.

It is the species that makes constant progress and ascends toward God. But the individual is the negation of the species. He exists only in the degree in which he limits the general impersonality. In no way, we reply; so little is the individual the negation of the species that the species is real only in individuals, and but for individuals, the genus would have no existence, would be itself a negation. It is individuals who affirm the genus; it is individuals which enable the genus to make progress. For we must always remember that which Hegelianism has forgotten, namely, that the individual man is something else than a mere specimen of his race. The proof is in the fact that the individual acts on his race, accelerates or retards its step, according to the use which he makes of his genius, and has rights in face of his race. The Spinozan motto, which Hegelianism has adopted, *omnis determinatio negatio*, all definition is negation, is a great error. If true it would follow that the most undefined being would be the most real; while experience proves the contrary, and teaches us that a being is so much more elevated in the scale of the universe, so much fuller of life—in a word, so much more affirmative, the more he is definite; God must be infinitely definite in himself to be the absolute reality. Were the Hegelian thesis of the purely negative character of the individual well founded, then the more perfected the individual, the more obscured would be the feeling of individuality, and the more would it be lost in that of the whole. But history, and each one's experience categorically contradicts this the necessary consequence of the principle. The fact is, that the intellectual great ones of whom we spoke but now, even those who died for humanity, postulated in no way the abstract immortality of the species, but their own and that of every man.

Strauss now thinks himself at liberty to direct a shower of sarcasm on the way in which "the Philistines" reason on the

body. Many analogies encourage the opinion that there are no essential differences in the planetary matter. In a word, grand hope of eternal progress. What ideal would not suffer by being translated into the vulgar tongue? And because Faust finds its caricature in the imbecile Wagner, must we abjure its noble aspirations? Let him also have full leave to share in the indignation of Richter on hearing of those persons who, if they must give up the hope of immortality, "would not think themselves superior to swine, and would prefer the life of the animals to their own." These are unworthy thoughts, and it must be acknowledged that even without a future life, it is better to live on earth in a human than in a bestial form. But if man is not bound to be moral by the sole reason that he is immortal, not less ought we to maintain that he is immortal because he is bound to be moral. Without immortality we have within us the most lamentable conflict in creation; and if, without immortality, we must nevertheless be religious, pure, as well as hunger and thirst after the ideal and the infinite, there would be terrible folly in our nature in thus tending to the infinite in despite of its destiny. Then every man, while yearning for divine realities, would be like a bird who beats itself incessantly against the bars of its cage. Still might we be the first of all creatures, but certainly we should be the most miserable.

It is also possible that we allow ourselves to be drawn on to chimerical reveries when we speak of a possible relation between our future destiny and the celestial worlds. But the consideration by which Strauss attempts to cut short these hypotheses, namely, the indissoluble connexion which exists between each star and its inhabitants, who, like us, proceeding from the total organism of the particular world which they inhabit, are inseparable from it, as we from the earth, is a mere fancy. In any case, it could apply to only our actual

our globe which undergoes the direct influence of the other orbs of heaven, even as it makes its own felt by them; on the surface of which life appears only by means of the action of forces coming from without, combined with its own inherent forces, does not lead a solitary life in space. All of us at every instant partake in those numerous and essential bonds which make our earth a member of the cosmos, and absolutely nothing hinders us from taking to the letter the title of "citizens of heaven."

As a last resource Strauss occupies himself with the criticism of the metaphysical proofs of a personal immortality; and here he is least assailable. The first victim he immolates is the old spiritualistic argument, which, separating by a great gulf spirit and matter, the soul and the body, making the one the simple opposite of the other, deduces the immortality of the soul from the absolute lack of relations between the two. There is no difficulty in showing that this argument has no force, except you put the conclusion you want in the major proposition of your syllogism, that is, you must beforehand, define mind and matter so as to throw into prominence their radical contradiction. Now, in reality, spirit and matter exist in man in no such absolute antagonism. Man is one being, who is spirit and matter. The hypotheses of the ancient spiritualism, its "animal spirits," its "occasional causes," its "pre-established harmony," &c., have, by emptiness, shown how false that dualism is.

In our days, it has been attempted to connect personal immortality with the Hegelian speculation. But the efforts of Göschel* are powerless to deduce it from the idea of the unique substance realising itself in virtue of its immanent

* "Von den Beweisen für die Unsterblichkeit der Menschlichen Seele; 1834;" London, Nutt, 270, Strand.

negativeness, through and by means of individuals. From this point of view it is clear that the individual must of necessity be absorbed by the species, the temporary negation by the eternal affirmation. In vain is it to appeal, as does our philosopher, to a pretended essential difference between man and nature. Nature, he says, is essentially otherness (*anderheit*) that is, it is indifferent to its radical transformation. It always remains object, whatever changes it undergoes. On the contrary, the mind is essentially identity, and resists whatever tends to annihilate it, so as to make it become something else. Accordingly the idea, the Divine Thought immanent in things, eternally pursuing them in their essence, preserves the intellectual subject identical with itself, on the same ground that it continually changes the natural object. After having set forth this cloudy argument, Strauss burst into a fit of laughter, saying, "Who then has told Göschel that the natural being is indifferent to its annihilation? He prudently chooses for his examples pure aggregates, a cloud of dust. Let him only try to make a dog or a cat pass into his 'otherness.' The teeth of the former, and the claws of the latter would soon teach him that they are by us means indifferent to their experience." Nevertheless the thought of Göschel has a value for the matter with which we are engaged; as indeed every thing that observation furnishes tending to specify a difference in the respective destiny of man and all other beings. It may, when put into English, denote that the repugnance which exists to the notion of annihilation is a truly human sentiment, a sentiment that man carries in his mind all his life, even when nothing directly threatens him, and that for those who think that the nature of a being is in relation with his destiny, there is here an indication of a human destiny, different from the destiny of the animals. These, it is true, like every living thing, resist whatever tends

to rob them of life; but, notwithstanding all the sense which some now concede to the brutes, I do not think any of them is accessible to the particular feeling which all men more or less possess, even those who in no way fear death itself. But Göschel, hampered with the Hegelian logic, had not, without quitting the system he did not wish to leave, the power to escape from the reasoning. Reality is the impersonal idea of the species; and, in consequence, the individual has no right to live on, whatever may be his repugnance in presence of death.

It is true that when you are freed from all metaphysical superstition, you may bring Strauss to a stand still at the first word of his syllogism, by asking him if that reality which is only the impersonal idea of the species, is not of all things the most unreal. Then we may observe that after all, Hegelianism can require only the final absorption of the individual by the species, while it is observation alone which authorises Strauss to declare that absorption is coincident with death. On this point our critic opens a road which will be prolonged by people for whom he has no great respect—the band of materialists; who will speedily make merry in the midst of the ruins of idealism, dead of inanition. But no matter for the moment. What it is important to show here is, that no longer can Strauss or Göschel pretend to settle every thing by *a priori* dialectics. Weisse grants to experience more scope in his manner of handling the question. According to him, philosophy is alone able to determine the conditions on which a soul may pretend to immortality, but experience alone can inform us if there are souls which possess those conditions. Those conditions are summed up in one—the communion of our life with the Absolute Spirit. He only is immortal who, entering into himself, finds there a power stronger than nature, and all egotism. The great majority

of the human race, who never attain to that height, are destined for annihilation. Strauss objects, and, as it seems to me, with reason; that such a theory supposes total death to be the natural destiny of the individual, in which case the exceptional immortality of some choice souls would be a true miracle, a metaphysical prodigy, achieved by a purely moral fact. This is to introduce into human nature a Manichaean dualism; which cannot be accepted by speculative reason. If there are immortal men, it is because human nature possesses in itself the power of immortality; beyond that, dialectics cannot go. The idea of Weisse contains, nevertheless, a great truth, if by it we understand that what constitute man's immortality is that personal and immediate relation of man with God, in virtue of which man tends to God, lives for him, lives in his sight, and constantly draws new forces and a new life in the ideal, always more sublime the nearer it is approached, and which insensibly unfolds itself before the eyes of those by whom it is sought. Eternal nutriment is necessary for the life eternal. But here we return to our great teleological principle of the destination of man to perfection, to the image of God. What, if I mistake not, Weisse wished was to maintain the relation of individuals with the species, such as it is required to be by Hegelianism, united with a desire of not assigning to the moral and religious soul a purely animal end. For that he required something which made of distinguished individuals more than the momentary negation of substance, and he thought he had found the cup of immortality in the communion of the individual with that absolute substance. Cut away the Hegelian principle, and there remains the universal thesis of the natural immortality of the moral and religious being.

On all sides then we find ourselves invited to break the circle of iron. Speculative axioms cannot long hold their own

before experience, when experience is contrary to them. It compels the mind to modify them, so as to bring them into harmony with itself. We may apply this remark to a principle put forward by Strauss, that "whatever has a beginning must have an end;" just as whatever has an end must have had a beginning; without which, the sum total of being would undergo augmentations or diminutions, which is contradictory. To appeal to the pre-existence of souls in order to maintain their immortality, is a desperate resource which cannot stand against criticism. As to ourselves, observation obliges us to express the metaphysical point of view differently, without going into that extreme against which our inner feeling protests energetically. In our opinion, it is solely of the world that it is necessary to postulate eternity and permanent equality with itself. For it is not impossible to conceive that the powers which successively realize themselves, in proportion as the conditions of their realization appear, have always existed. It is in this manner that our actual Geology leads us to represent to ourselves the appearance of life on our globe. The germs of life, in a latent state, must have existed in its bosom, virtual before their realization in fact was possible. Were it otherwise, it is the metaphysical axiom itself we must deny on the authority of experience; for certain it is that life has commenced on the globe, and if, at the moment of its appearance, that sum total of being was not really augmented, one does not see how the permanent duration of individuals would augment it afterwards.

The observation of man, in history and in the individual, is that which, in a question such as the one that occupies our thoughts, ought decidedly to have the last word; and no *a priori* metaphysical formula has a right to oppose its *veto* to the conclusions to which it legitimately leads. Such is the doctrine which we consider ourselves justified to affirm, as

suggested by Strauss' chapter on a future life. Moreover, it is the consequence to which his book impels you, from one end to the other. He simply intended to write the epitaph, the *requiescat in pace*, of the old dogmas, without perceiving that he buried with them the metaphysics in the name of which he declared them interred for ever. As we have said, the great proof of a personal and conscious immortality is that man is never completed before the dissolution of his body, and—a remarkable fact—feels himself so much the less completed in the degree in which he attains a high degree of development. If the babe which yet lies in its mother's womb could observe itself and reason, it would as legitimately conclude from the study of itself that it was destined to a more perfect existence. Each living man from the moment in which conscience is born within him, projects toward the infinite a line which prolongs itself eternally. For it is to God that it makes its way; God draws it on toward himself, and ever does it approach its end, yet reaches it never. This immortality is personal, for God is *our* God; it is not the human race in the abstract which God causes to ascend to himself, but individuals; and only the race by them, with them, and in them. Otherwise he would be "the God of the dead," and every human conscience from which rises the sigh for the infinite, would be deceived and repelled by the very voice which says to him, "come to me!"

The best means of awakening in yourself and in others the consciousness of immortality is then, to collect the phenomena in which the grand truth that death is not the end of man, shines forth with special brilliancy. Some of these phenomena we have presented as we have gone along. It is specially in the moral and religious world that they offer themselves. The single fact that man is a religious being, I mean, that he is drawn by The Absolute, whom all his life

he seeks without ever being as near as he desires, preaches his immortality. God then attracts man, and wishes that man should rise toward himself. The exceptional certainty assumed in us by the belief in immortality in circumstances when the soul, moved in its depths, rises superior to the trivialities of the earth, (during oppressive grief, in view of noble self-devotement, near saintly death beds,) is a living word which declares that our destiny reveals itself to us better on the heights of moral sentiment than in the arid dust or the difficult marshes of common life. The eye of the mind, being more pure, sees the things of God more clearly and distinctly. The fact that sin, all our life long, stands in the way of our realising the desires of conscience; that conscience never justifies self-satisfaction, is also a prediction of immortality. The history of the belief in immortality is far from dissolving as Strauss asserts. For long independent of philosophy, faith in a future life insensibly grew up in man's mind. Never has man, even when ruled by pure instinct, had the idea of his absolute annihilation. "The dead sleep"—this is the ancient belief, a belief which foretold an awaking. Then, society declared the immortality of heroes, those who had raised themselves to such a height as to seem superior to death. A parallel movement of the mind induced the primitive Christians to hold that martyrs and eminent saints did not pass through sheol, but ascended at once to God. At last arose a belief in a general immortality. This came when, having a distinct idea of the personality of each man, society felt that what belonged to men of note, lay as a germ in all men. Faith in immortality has continually become more affirmative, and, in one sense, more aspiring, in the degree in which man has risen above a purely instructive state of existence. But specially rich in presentiments and revelations of the life to come, is the severe conflict carried on by the best,

even the perfect man, as long as he lives a corporeal life, in order to remain faithful to conscience. It may be said that for every man Gethsemane and Calvary involve the ascension from Olivet. Otherwise there would ensue this contradiction—that man never realises his true nature as man, except in the hour of his agony. Agony must be the means, the condition, not the end. At the bottom, every act of self-sacrifice, every martyrdom, every devotement of duty reveals immortality. For the universe teaches us that unfailing law, that the different kingdoms among which life is distributed, constantly tend to affirm themselves by sacrificing the lower to their exigencies. Only on this condition are they real and perpetual. Now, in man the moral life is superior to the bodily organism, and assumes the mastery over it. This prerogative proceeds even to distinction itself, for often the inner man commands the outer man to perish, just as the latter sacrifices inferior creatures for his own service. If man were not immortal, we should have before our eyes this absurdity, that the moral life destroys itself in order to realise itself; and where it most emphatically affirms itself, there it most entirely denies itself. In such a case man would be the great sophism of God.

Such is the voice of history; such is the preaching of experience. Without doubt we must follow it even to the corporeal man,—there we find a new adversary. Modern materialism, finding a powerful ally in the false notions of the spiritualism, which involve an absolute opposition between the body and the mind, and pretending that our personal life is simply the result of a certain combination of physical and chemical laws, comes forward to contradict our conclusion in favour of a conscious and personal immortality. The confidence with which it speaks might make men fancy that its doctrines are mathematically demonstrated. I send those who

would estimate the value of their proofs, to the most recent treatises on physiology. They will see that darkness yet hangs over the most important phenomena of life. Besides, materialism in its application to anthropology, will always suffer shipwreck on the realities of our moral nature. If man is but the result of the chemical and physical forces of his body, how is it that he is determined by an internal force, at every instant foreign and contrary to that result? Will materialism extricate itself by denying moral obligation? Whence then comes the illusion which has always misled men under the name of duty? Illusions—would there be such things if there were only physical and chemical laws? Entrenched behind our moral nature, we may, in all tranquility, watch the development of the natural sciences. Their present progress, moreover, does not favour materialism, unless you do not look very closely into the phenomena. Doubtless, experimental analysis will discover in the human body only substances similar to substances of the same name, which are found on our planet. Doubtless, the laws which send the blood through our arteries and veins are the same hydraulic laws which govern the movements of all liquids. Digestion and nutrition are purely chemical transformations. Nervous phenomena present striking analogies with electric currents. In a word, the analysis of our organs and their functions does not establish the presence of that hypothetical agent, dignified by certain medical schools with the name of *Vital force*. What then, does all this explain life? Does all this tell us what is the mysterious power which makes this ingenious selection of substances, and combines in a thousand ways, we know not how many physical and chemical laws, so as to form a living unity? Does this enable us to comprehend the instinctive resistance of the organism to whatever is injurious to it, and its power of self-reparation and self-care? With reason has it been said; the

demonstrations of materialism resemble the attempt of a person who should take it into his head to explain the harmony of a concert of instruments, solely with the aid of physical and chemical forces. When he has described the chemical composition of each of them, calculated within a hair's breadth, the vibrations of the waves of sound which they send forth, the degree of impulse given in their emission by the mouth or the arm of the performers, the relation of the surrounding air with each and every note,—would he have said all? True, one thing only would he have omitted; but that is the essence of the whole; he would have forgotten the leader of the orchestra, beating time; but for whose directing hand and mind the whole would be one huge dissonance.

Physiological studies have a close relation with psychology. The continual assimilation and elimination of the substances of which bodies are made up, place in full light the supremacy of the one identical conscious principle, which lives on through the total and reiterated renewals of the body.

The plurality of the nervous centres is acknowledged; and, henceforward, you may question the science of the man who seeks in some corner of the brain the power which commands the whole frame. The unity of life must have its source above the nervous system in which it appears in separate branches; for instance, it is the cerebellum, or hinder part of the brain, which presides over the harmony of our voluntary movements, and it is in the spinal marrow that the need and the power of respiration resides. Another result of contemporaneous physiology is to show the absurdity of the questions which scholasticism so long propounded, and which it resolved with heroic daring, that is, the time when the soul enters the body. The soul must not be identified with self-consciousness, which is a property, a faculty to which it comes only after a certain development. The soul itself certainly

exists in the primitive organic cellule, the numberless multiplications of which by itself, and the prodigious transformations of which, produce its future organs, one after another, and all in relation with its future destiny. In the imperceptible globule then there exists an unconscious artificer, a knowing something which knows not itself, which, led by instinct alone, directs the formation and arrangement of its several members. This is the clearest information given us at present by physiological science, and there is in such results something extremely spiritualistic. A modern materialist has said, that the soul is to the body that which the centre is to the circumference—the former makes the latter: take away the circumference the centre exists no longer. But to make the example pertinent you should furnish the centre with a moveable radius, by means of which it could trace its curve, if it had ink near and a hand to use it. Thus there would be raised a corner of this mysterious veil which hides our future destiny. If our real person, our I, has already incarnated itself in this way, so as to make itself a body out of surrounding materials, why should it not repeat the process in a similar form, when arrived at a higher degree of its development? Perhaps even the actual body contains the rudiments of that superior organisation, and our metamorphosis resembles that of the intermediate layers of the animal kingdom, being the means of transition between a preparatory existence and a more perfect life. When also you reflect that our features depend not only on circumstances which may invest them with physical beauty or plainness, but also on our character, our fundamental tendencies, in a word, on our individual qualities: you see there is nothing impossible in our mutual recognition in the life to come—that pleasurable hope which Strauss considers egotistical, but which we believe legitimate; and indeed the Creator in prolonging our loves

from one end of life to another, even long after the objects of them have disappeared from the scene of this world, seems to have stamped them with the seal of eternity.

I am fully aware that I here proceed on pure hypothesis, even while on the last point I am affirmative, at least as to the fact itself, if not as to the explanation which I have ventured to give. There is, however, this much of truth in the criticism of Strauss, namely, that our eschatology in continually growing more simple has also grown less substantial. We affirm the future life, but have nothing to say on the mode of its realisation. This has no reason for denying it. Simplicity is better than unreal display. Besides this, simplicity has the advantage of throwing into relief certain elements which, without doubt, were not strangers to the ancient eschatology, but were much overshadowed by its surroundings. Thus the ignorance in which we are, as to the mode of our future existence, has, for a necessary result, that we attach ourselves much more to that which alone can be its sure basis, our communion with God, active love put for ever at his service. If we cease to fear the flames of hell, we ought only the more to dread the torments of conscience. Religion itself becomes more spiritual when its hopes have become so. The magnificent idea of universal salvation, that sacred affirmation, forms part, tacit or avowed, of the confession of faith of the *élite* of the church, and rests on the essential ethical character of the future life. A purely spiritual salvation cannot be purchased nor be given by a substitute; the idea of redemption is purified by its contact with the spirituality of the world to come. Christian thought then is not, as Strauss would have it, totally decomposed and dissipated. At the same time we do not deny that we should be glad to know something respecting the form of the life to

come, and nothing absolutely forbids the hope that the union of physiological and psychological researches, each as yet pursued in much too exclusive a character, may at last throw some light on the secrets of the future which awaits us.

Having brought our labours to an end, we think it a duty to add a last word. We shall have been mis-understood if we are thought to have intended to demonstrate a personal immortality. It is not a matter for demonstration, in the strict sense of the word. You may embarrass the person who refuses to believe in it; you may confute the reason he alledges for his unbelief; but you cannot so compel him to abjure it. If we are right in declaring that man is immortal because he is not complete in his earthly existence, it is clear that faith in immortality can be founded on only one of these two bases: either a religious tradition admitted; without reflexion, blindly; or the personal experience which alone can give the evidence to which we appeal. On this ground it is that I have elsewhere said that a belief in immortality is a result of an intuition of the future, and not the conclusion of a syllogism. If I am to have a firm hope of my own personal immortality, I must have reached that height in the spiritual life—that moral and religious altitude—in which this earthly life and all that it can offer me, is with me inferior to the destiny to which I feel myself invited. Here is the reason why the faithful Christian carries in himself the evidence of his own immortality. Here is the ground on which the Holy Spirit places in our spirits the first fruits of the life which will never end. Here is the reason why he who has faith in Jesus Christ has even now the life eternal. Here too is the reason why it is declared that our “Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light.” (2 Tim. i. 10.) To take from death its sting, and to yield in

manly confidence to the current of the eternal river which flows on to the Father, it is sufficient to contemplate his person, and to imbibe his spirit. For here we obtain the assurance that never does man more surely find his life than when, at the voice of duty, he is ready to surrender it.

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

BY ALBERT REVILLE, D.D.

It was on one of those fine winter evenings which Providence has bestowed on the northern regions to make up for their unattractive spring,—one of those evenings it is so pleasant to spend in a well-curtained room and near a bright fire, while talking over, with a friend, the latest news touching Art, Science, Politics, and the Church. True, I was alone with Stephen, who was to pass several days in the town where I dwell; but for me, his company was better than a crowd of ordinary faces. Stephen is one of those men for acquaintance with whom one blesses God as for a special favour. Benignant, affable, of fine ability, fond of chatting as well as of an earnest disposition, in love with conversation on serious subjects; a Christian on conviction, possessing also a mind imbued with all contemporaneous science; with a tone of thought, equally ardent and sincere, and actuated in his pastoral relations by an irreproachable zeal, he realises in my judgment a sort of perfection which I much like to contemplate closely, as it lives and speaks in him. Never without profit, though often humiliated, I converse with him respecting the needs—the present and future,—of our Church and of society in general. Would that I possessed the serene hopes which he joins to a very vivid sense of our actual infelicities, the simple and natural faith, spiritual in essence and little beset by forms, which he maintains and nourishes in the midst of our theological chaos, and which he has elevated to that

height, where criticism, philosophy, controversies, lose their dissolving power; and his christian activity which he ever keeps at an equal pace with the most profound researches. The friendship with which he honours me proceeds probably from his fancy that I possess the aspirations and tendencies which have become the principles and elements of his life; just as my continually growing affection for him has for its cause and support the satisfaction one has in finding in another that which one desires to possess oneself. As far as it can be said of a man and a friend, he is to me an ideal.

One of his most constant desires, a desire which results from the happy way in which he unites theory and practice, thought and life, is to discover the means of popularising in the Church the principles of the modern theology with which he is imbued, without, while he attempts to purify men's belief, doing any damage to the edifice itself, which however so many persons consider indissolubly bound to the old scaffolding whose inevitable fall must bring down the building it has so long upheld. Moreover as he has no taste whatever for theological diplomacy, and cannot speak of God, Christ, and salvation without saying exactly what he thinks, he would be glad to find the middle terms by which the simple-minded and little instructed might pass on to religious conceptions, more just and more salutary than those of tradition, without the necessity of every one's possessing that theological erudition, the consequences of which the old orthodoxy cannot any longer endure; access to which however is possible for the many only by slow degrees, and after a succession of years, not to say generations. In the efforts which he makes with this view, he reaps astonishing success as a catechist and preacher; and the young especially, in the populous city in which he exercises his ministry, by their affection, their attendance, and other encouraging signs, repay the very great trouble he takes

to shed the light of truth and the warmth of life on minds which in these days would be closed to the former had they not been opened by the latter. I have no need to tell with what eagerness I gather from his lips the results of the experience on this difficult side of modern preaching, which he has collected partly from his own labours, partly from the labours of others. Nearly always agreeing with him as to principles and theories, I feel the deepest interest in watching the way in which he reduces both to practice in the active duties of the Christian ministry.

The evening of which I speak, our conversation turned on the now much debated question of authority in matters of faith, or belief. I drew his attention to the enormous misunderstanding that still existed thereon between many congregations and their preachers, a mis-understanding which is kept up by our traditional forms, our ecclesiastical usages, certain essential elements of public and domestic worship, and even the custom of taking from the Bible a text, as the necessary theme of all our discourses from the pulpit. Moreover, the advocates of a completely free faith cannot deny that in fact, and to some extent, in right, authority has its part to play in the religious education of man and society. The child cannot do without it; and how many men remain to the end of their days, children in religious knowledge. And how can one declare from the pulpit, before an open Bible, a Bible perpetually appealed to, in the presence of an auditory of which the majority consists of such children—how can one declare that outward authority in matters of faith has no claim to exact the subjection of the conscience and reason of individuals? There resulted between Stephen and myself an exchange of reflexions in which turn by turn the theory and the demands of practice were examined in their respective rights; and, with my mind quite absorbed by all I had heard

and said, I thought of throwing the substance into a review article—when I remembered that I had to preach the next day. Reflecting on the two demands, I thought I could conciliate their claims by choosing the subject of that conversation for the theme of the discourse I had to deliver on the morrow. Without having the least pretension of exhausting in a few pages so grave and complicated a subject as that of authority in matters of faith, I shall then endeavour here to reproduce the chief points of a conversation which gave me much to reflect on, and which, as I hope, will not have proved useless either to myself or to others.

In order to show the ground on which Stephen and I were led to consider the question of authority, I cannot do better than state the point where our conversation commenced. We were speaking of the materialism of the present day, which unhappily has engulphed so many distinguished minds, and which threatens with death the very sciences in the name of which it pretends to impose itself on our acceptance, I remarked that this disposition to deny mind, to see everywhere only a game of physical forces, to replace philosophy by chemistry, had obtained for itself great influence in the absolute dualism placed between mind and matter. To such an extent had this gone, that to admit their co-existence in the same being was impossible. If mind is simply the opposite of matter, and matter simply the opposite to mind, if there is nothing in common between the two, how can the one exert any influence over the other? Not their opposition, but distinction it is that ought to be asserted and maintained. Unhappily, I continued, general opinion is habituated to regard them as directly opposed; and since, in all the sciences, the method of observation has triumphed over the *a priori* method, it follows that many an observer, meeting at first with matter and material laws, has been led to deny the invisible substance,

mind, which never presented itself to the focus of his microscope; to set matter in opposition to mind as the scientific reality contrasted with practical reverie; and in any case to think that the phenomena commonly placed in the category of mind, could not find an explanation on the outside of physical forces and their known applications. Thus the spiritual world—God, the soul, religion, duty, immortality, &c.—has been referred to a particular series of cervical secretions, and in consequence, adjudged to be empty dreams, possessing not the slightest reality.

You are right, said Stephen; only do not show the honour to materialism of thinking that it is the legitimate offspring of observation. It denies mind because it no where sees it; but does it see matter to which it reduces all things? Has it anywhere met with a body, a substance, an atom which it may show us while saying, "There is primordial matter—matter absolute, disengaged from all form, and independant of all law?" Certainly not. It does nothing more than establish facts of a certain kind, laws of a certain order. Matter itself, as a pure substance, is as much unknown to it as mind to us; and after all it is the extreme of the *à priori* method to pretend that the manifestations of existence cannot surpass the sphere of the laws called chemical and physical. In reality, he continued, the empirical method cannot be materialistic. By the single fact that we do not and cannot meet with formless matter, we have the right to declare matter exists nowhere alone; and that the least organised body, the most material object, witnesses the continued co-existence and coincidence of two forces, one which acts, the other which is acted on, and then re-acts; and I do not see why we should not call the first mind. What after all are we taught by observation, enlightened by all the acquisitions of modern science? This, namely, that man is the point of junction of two worlds,

and that he tends to pass from one to the other. If we consider all that precedes us, we see existence rise towards us by a slow, insensible movement, passing through all the degrees of development; at first chaotic matter: by which I mean matter without laws defineable by our intelligence; then vegetable life; then animal. Observe that each anterior degree is necessary to the degree by which it is immediately followed, so that it is impossible to see in the latter the pure negation of the former; and yet, there is something new, something which existed not before, in each superior degree compared with its antecedent; something which in part denies the anterior reality, even while making use of it as a necessary medium. An organized cellule, which multiplies itself indefinitely, says to us something which would be false of a cellule exactly similar in its chemical composition, but lacking vital impulse. It is on the latter degree of being, on the animal, that we men have, so to say, been engrafted.

But while the animal life is the point of arrival for all that goes before, it is for us the point of departure. A new series of facts and laws, up to this point unknown, begins with us. This animal, physical man, thrown naked on the naked earth, obliged to pass more painfully than all others through the conditions of growth, rules all others from an inconceivable elevation. He thinks, he speaks, he compares, he reasons, he loves, he adores, he owns moral obligation. His countenance reflects sentiments born with him on the earth. Hate, remorse, hope, heart-suffering, admiration, moral firmness, religious aspiration,—all this is painted on his features. To rise, to ascend, to progress, to sigh for the mysterious and unknown world, on the borders of which he feels himself, and the reality of which forces itself on his mind as soon as that mind awakes: as the light strikes the eye of the newly-born babe;—this we might call man's instinct, if

we were to make intellectual man a fresh chapter in Natural History; and by a strange paradox, which, nevertheless, by its undeniable truth, defies all systems of materialism, past, present, and future, man is never truly happy except on condition of never being satisfied.

You conclude then, I said to Stephen, that the new phenomena inherent in human nature, suppose that something new has appeared with man, something unknown, not to be found in anterior nature, and that if the humblest moss denotes in itself a principle, a cause, a motive force, the properties and effects of which you would in vain seek in inorganic nature, the life of man also has for cause a principle active, and as active, so real, to which you must give a new name, and of which the properties may differ from those of material, vegetable, and animal bodies.

Not may, but must differ, replied Stephen. For I defy materialism to refer to the same category of forces and laws, the stone and the plant. If that faculty which essentially constitutes life, namely, the assimilation of external substances for growth and self-propagation, is absolutely different to, and often exclusive of anterior physical verities, I am justified in declaring that the mind, which produces so many phenomena, not only before unknown, but also opposed to all before known, is a power distinct from the rest, and in which consequently the laws applicable to the rest, have lost their value. This results from the most immediate experience. Suppose then for a moment, that the mind is only the modification of an already known material body; suppose, as has been lately said in Germany, that man owes his intellectual superiority, even the animal, to the greater proportion of phosphorus contained in his brain, I ask you what the author of so ridiculous a statement (belied by other observations as to the material fact) would say of a Chemical Dictionary, in which

under the article Phosphorus, there should stand these words: "Phosphorus, a simple body, luminous in the dark, solid at the ordinary temperature, transparent, colourless, tasteless, having an onion-like odour; combines with many metals (phosphurets) forms divers acids which produce salts (phosphates and phosphites); in certain conditions becomes rational, religious, moral, artistic, and speculates on change."

I burst into laughter at this unexpected sally. I understand you, I said, you wish to maintain the sublime realities which humanity will never deny, while placing yourself in the point of view of the continual development of the divine thought, that lasting fruit of Hegel's teaching, which must be maintained, must it not? without allowing oneself to be strangled by the mechanism of the system. Thus, in your opinion, religion, which undoubtedly is the most lofty, the most rich, the most universal of the phenomena of the mind, came to man, not from without but from within.

Evidently, replied Stephen; but let us understand each other. Religion comes to man from within, that is, he is religious by nature, and the forms under which he represents divine things to himself, depend on his internal condition. But that does not mean that the object of his religion is found within him. It is in this matter as it is with sight. Within us the faculty of vision resides, and within us operate the optical laws, determining the forms under which objects appear to us. But by the side of that is the outer world, without the existence of which we should see nothing. In the same way, the mind obeys an inmost law of its existence when it detaches itself from the material and animal world in order to seek God; but to reduce God to the mind seeking itself is to reproduce the obsolete system of Fichte; or to say that he is only the result of an optical illusion—man doubled. No; the human mind, as I have said, is the first manifestation to

us of the higher world, on the borders of which we stand. Its tendency is to pass from the lower world into the sphere of infinitude. The mind tends toward God, toward the ideal, the absolute; and we are as certain that the object of that tendency exists as, at the view of a flowing stream, we are sure that it runs toward the ocean or toward a lake. It is a law of the whole universe that each thing is attracted by its object; consequently every attraction supposes a real object; every tendency implies an end, failing which, there would be no tendency. All historical religions, the dead and the living, are so many efforts made by man to pass from the animal life, and to lift himself to the divine life. In this everlasting pilgrimage the pilgrim every instant sees that he is losing his way. Yet it cannot be said that he has ever gone astray for long. With every religion, too, man imagines he has reached the end. The morning comes, morning of painful experience, when he is made aware that he has been mistaken. No matter. The mind, with its interior force, is still active, and under its impulse the pilgrim resumes his task, sets out once more, and journeys on until he thinks he has reached the absolute—that which cannot be surpassed—that which he must adore for ever.

All that, I answered, is very fine; but, O philosopher, have you nothing better to say for the poor abortion whose sole possession is his short life and superficial knowledge? Is the endless course of the Wandering Jew a very encouraging symbol of the religious destiny of man? Here am I, an individual, thrown by the chance of birth into the midst of one of those historical religions of which you speak, the most beautiful and sublime of all, I am willing to believe; but who assures me that it, like every other, is not one station on the endless road? Who assures me that we are not advancing toward a day when Christianity shall be to its successor what

Greek paganism, or even Judaism, was to Christianity? Is there not an enormous scepticism in the theory by which I confess I am attracted, perhaps more than I should be, the theory, I say, of the successive evolutions of the universal religion?

I understand you, said Stephen; and that reminds of a conversation I lately had with a passionate admirer of the Chinese civilisation. It is more difficult than you imagine to prove the superiority of ours over theirs. My companion had passed many years of his life in China, and to every thing I alleged respecting our industry, our governments, our legislations, he replied by parallel facts, or by citing more than one thing which we have not, but ought to have, and which is possessed by the Chinese. I saw very well that, on the ground of details, the discussion would last a long time without any issue. I seized a position which made me master of the field of battle. After all, I said to him, there is one thing which proves our superiority; we can appreciate the Chinese civilisation, while the Chinese are wholly unable to appreciate ours. We observe that theirs has often something reasonable, ingenious, or admirable; while they, in doltish misapprehension, confound all we say or do. It is only our Armstrong Guns that have succeeded in extorting from them some respect. In a word, we understand them, and they do not understand us. Here is the reason why our civilisation is in itself superior to theirs, and is destined to supersede it. For it is the product of a superior mind. It is the only one of historical religions in the bosom of which you can appreciate the rest, discern their merits and defects, and criticise itself without ending with denial or renunciation. I speak, you will be sensible, of pure Christianity, such as it exists in the mind of Him from whom it takes its name. It is different with the Churches, or with what one may call the

Christian religions. The Christian can understand all religions; he surpasses them all; and the fact may give us confidence as to the future of Christianity. This faculty of understanding the religions of the world comes from the fact that Christianity is not *a* but *the* religion. It is implanted in human kind without dogmas, without church, without ceremonies. It is then linked to nothing perishable. Man must cease to be religious by nature before Christianity gives place to a successor. Consider whether, at this moment, it is possible for an earnest man to speak of religion without his voice taking a christian tone. Even those who are not prepared to speak with the Son of Man cannot help speaking according to his Holy Spirit. And Stephen, thereupon, pointed to the book of Monsieur J. Simon on *Natural Religion*, which lay open on my desk.

It is so; I said to him; the thought has often occurred to me, and tranquilised my mind in presence of the scepticism too apt to rise from the study of past ages. Nor do I retire from the meditation without feeling that our own age will one day appear as much in the rear, as full of errors as its predecessors. However I am only half satisfied. You will grant me that if Christianity is in its origin quite independent of all formal dogma, it is not the less the parent of that luxuriant forest, sometimes very picturesque, often very dark and very stormy, which is called the History of Dogma. Why has Christianity produced dogmas? Is it simply owing to the *dilettantism* of Christians, who have found in dogma an exercise which was pleasant and strengthening? Is it not much rather because it was impossible that dogma should not proceed out of Christianity, that faith should not seek an intellectual expression?—Evidently—Then we are not wrong now when we require something more positive, more apprehensible, by our intellect, than the powerful but indefinite sentiments, which

unite our hearts to the heart of Christ. That is enough to enable us to live religiously, but not to satisfy our intelligence. We see that Christian doctrine has to be re-constructed. We declare the necessity with a loud voice. But where is the architect whose strong hand shall raise an edifice capable of sheltering us all? Besides, if we saw the building rise we should have to say this will suffice for some generations; after it another will rise just as the last succeeded the Reformers; the Reformers succeeded the Schoolmen, the Schoolmen the Fathers, and the Fathers the Apostles. Do you know that criticism and history, at the very time that they undermine all religious authority, call up in the mind a strong temptation to accept religious authority of some kind with our eyes closed?

Without doubt, replied Stephen; and it is characteristic of our times that the two principles of liberty and authority have never been better understood in their radical opposition, and have never been carried by their respective partisans to a more intense paroxysm. It is not by accident that the age which has witnessed on the part of very religious men the proclamation of the nullity of all external authority in religion, is that in which bibliolatry among Protestants, and ultramontaniam among Catholics, have reached their apogee. Nothing, in my opinion, better proves the transitory character of our epoch. For this contrariety always appears in periods of transition. As long as belief is entire, uncontested, if not in all its ramifications, at least at its root, men enjoy spiritual repose. At least they declare themselves at rest; for I confess that those purely negative enjoyments, enjoyments void of the charm of comparison, have little attraction for me. But the time being come in which hereditary faith is shaken, men find themselves at once dispossessed of their anterior convictions, and tormented by unanswerable questions which

rise before their minds. Then some, alarmed at the void before them, return by a desperate effort to the old things which are passing away, and endeavour to retain them at any cost. They apply themselves to the effort with the energy of terror, with the persistence of a man who hangs by a single branch over a precipice. Is that branch strong? Will it hold firm? Does not prudence advise you to try its power of resistance? Truly a fine question! The branch is there, near the hand, and the sole alternative is to seize it or perish.

Others, convinced of the irremediable perishingness of the old belief, give it up, and resign themselves to the fall with as much fortitude as they can. Then, all mangled, all bleeding, they endeavour to regain the height alone, distrusting all aid promised from above, and little envying the position of others whom they see suspended between heaven and earth, at the end each one of his branch which threatens to break immediate. Happy those who, though dejected at a futile effort to recover their ground, do not resign themselves to remain in the marsh at the bottom of the precipice, but struggle upward until they are once more in safety and peace.

Excellently, I said; you describe things in a superior way. But I asked you for counsel as to the existing evil, and what do you but describe the evil in a way, the justness of which I do not question, but in which I find no grounds for a revival of confidence.

What, rejoined Stephen, what could you have? I suffer, or rather I have suffered from the general evil. At present I suffer less for myself than for others.

So that either you think yourself in a condition to impart to our undecided generation a body of yet unpublished beliefs, which will command general assent; and I think you too modest, too self-distrustful, to attribute to you such ambition;

or you have discovered a middle term, a point where authority and liberty may meet together in peace, which suffices for yourself, but which is not of a kind to be offered to all the world.

You shall see and judge for yourself, he replied. But first tell me how it comes to pass that you, whom I have long known for a determined friend of the principle of liberty, speak as if there was some vacillation in your thoughts?

What would you? As a theologian, as a reasoner, I am in no way shaken intellectually. But who in our days does not know the trial of heart there is when one is required to take hard, severe, oppressive truth, austere and stoical truth, in place of easy, composing, and accommodating error? As you know, I spend much of my time in studying religious history. Well, I am often seized with the desire of somewhere finding some good and solid eternal authority, infallible, and infallible without a doubt, safe from the attacks of criticism, under the shelter of which I might see history unroll its chronicles, as the aged mariner, now safe on shore, calmly contemplates the shipwrecks which are every year occasioned by the equinoctial gales. Do you know that one needs some strength of character to withstand the ordinary arguments employed by the partisans of authority, especially when the weapon used is wielded by an able hand? And in truth, I am often surprised they do not make more proselytes among men devoid of solid historical knowledge. Open any one of the works intended to defend the absolute authority of the Church or the Bible. What do you find? Constantly an elaborate proof of the powerlessness of man to attain any certainty whatever, beyond the pale of the alleged authority. "What temerity, what folly, worm of the dust, to wish to penetrate into the impenetrable by thy own resources! How, with thy ignorance and feebleness, can you expect to find your way through that maze of opinions and systems? Whither

have they been carried who acted as you are acting?" And then your reprover tells the piteous tale of all the aberrations into which the unaided mind of man has been hurried. The history of Philosophy is an inexhaustible arsenal. The brilliant follies of Plato, the profound errors of Aristotle, the cynicism of Diogenes, the fatalism of the Stoics, the sensualism of the sty of Epicurus, the hallucinations of the Pythagoreans and Alexandrines—so much for the ancient world. In modern times, they pass in review before you the failure of Descartes, the pantheism of Spinoza, the ignoble materialism of the Last Century, the gigantic, but empty conceptions of Germany as it is—what more? If your mentor is a Catholic he adds a little flattering list of all the eccentric sects begotten by free inquiry, unchained by the Reformation, from the Anabaptists of Munster to the Mormons of the present hour. After which, out of all these freaks of the mind, out of all these ridiculous figures, out of all these caricatures of truth, out of all these monsters, pretending to be reasonable, but which are only extravagant, he forms for you a large idol in human shape, whose mouth opens as if to swallow you up in your turn; and when, bewildered and distressed, you, with clasped hands, ask, "What must I do to escape?" "Believe in the one true Church," says the Catholic; "Believe in the one infallible Book," says the Protestant.

My dear friend, replied Stephen; what pleasure you would give to the Abbé B—— and pastor G——, could each of them hear those words in your *tirade*, which square with their opinions. Thus, after all, your temptation to return to some authority has for its cause, not the assurance of having discovered an authority whose credentials will bear examination; but merely the fascination exercised over your imagination by a skilful combination of certain historical facts. But, in my turn, allow me to oppose fascination to fascination,

idol to idol. Mine will not be less diabolical than yours. I will first give him, as vanguard, some light armed troops who will clear his way and prepare for his formidable appearance. In the first place, making myself the champion of liberty in opposition to your terrifying style of argument, I declare to you distinctly that if at any time I should be possessed with a desire to subject myself to some authority, it is because I should have need of certainties which I do not easily obtain from free inquiry. Now, you must be told that your authority is not the least in the world proved by the fact that on the outside of it human reason has given birth to only errors and illusions, any more than I prove that a man is rich by showing that he is surrounded by paupers. I even confess that I should deduce from his companions a presumption not very favourable to his opulence. Moreover, I must say that for you as well as me the question regards external authority; but before every external authority there is an authority which was born and has grown up with me, and the requirements of which I am never at liberty to elude, the authority of my conscience, which tells me that, happen what may, even were I all my life to walk in darkness, I have no right for a moment to call that false which appears to me true, or to call that true which appears to me false, although all external authorities confederated should require me to lie to myself. I say further that the faith of authority is no faith at all, that it is only the limitation and the negation of real faith; for if I believe in God, in the immortality of my soul, in Christ as my Saviour, in my own personal salvation, not because my conscience and my reason find in those beliefs truth and happiness, but solely because the Church or the Bible bids me believe in them, then it is not in God, in the immortality of my soul, in Christ as my Saviour, in my own personal salvation that I believe but in the Church or the Bible; that is to say, when I drink

to quench my thirst I am to expect from the vase and not the liquid the refreshment of a salubrious draught. Evidently the vase is useful only for carrying the potion to my lips; when once I have swallowed the contents, it is either really restorative, and then I shall feel invigorated, or it is not, and then in vain shall I have drunk the draught. A vase that has fallen from heaven would not make lukewarm water agreeable to the taste, nor fetid water salutary. I also assert that with your fear to rely on yourself when you are in the presence of traditional authorities, you, if a Jew, would have rejected Christ; if a pagan, you would have refused the Gospel; if a Roman Catholic of the sixteenth century, you would have bought a good handful of indulgences and cursed Luther. Finally, I declare—and here is my idol to be placed by the side of yours—that if the human mind has often, when on the road of liberty, fallen into gross and immoral error, it has not been less unfortunate when on the road of authority. And then I take into my hands the history of religions, the history of churches, the history of dogmas, and now claim my turn to call forth frightful monsters and hideous phantoms; my turn to invoke the aid of terror, and say, look, these are the fruits of authority in matters of faith,—these, adored animals, immoral divinities, human sacrifices, sacerdotal tyrannies, divining juggleries, pontifical infamies, absurd dogmas, science gagged, consciences perverted, tantalising superstitions, religious persecutions, millions of martyrs whose blood cries aloud to heaven for retribution—and how much more? Now tell me, my dear friend, which picture is the more revolting?

You preached to one already converted, said I in reply. You have only repeated in your own form what I have often said to myself, and what, long ago, made me give preference to liberty over authority. By the latter one cannot shut the

door on gnawing doubt, any more than of old, people barred it out by cooping themselves up within the pages of a book or the enclosures of a priesthood. Of this I need no other proof than the anger and rage of those who still believe it necessary to surrender themselves prisoners. The only thing which allows a religious authority to subjugate minds, is the absence of all rival authority, the silence of every negative voice. In the middle ages, when the earth was not known, the Bible was not known, history was not known, man might believe in the Church. From the fifteenth century until now, so placid and serene a faith has been, and is, impossible. Some condemn themselves to the old authority, some resign themselves, some reason themselves, into its servitude; but no longer is there in the submission either security or peace. If one voice declares, in the hearing of the believers, that the authority on which he rests is illusory, the charm is broken, and all becomes uncertain and confused. Forthwith he is compelled to scrutinise the foundation of the house which he inhabits, to appeal to reason, to conscience—to the very tribunal he had done his best to shun. And if any one should attempt to prove to him the validity of the basis on which he placed his confidence, he would be able to fix its defender on one of the horns of this dilemma—either the belief dictated by your religious authority is agreeable to my conscience and my reason, and then why impose it on me and not limit yourself to the simple exposition of it? or it is contrary to my conscience and my reason; but then what right have you to appeal to that conscience and that reason to prove that I ought to surrender both? In virtue of what monstrous sophism do you expect to force me to believe that I am blind, when you begin your argument by saying to me, Now open your eyes and look on these considerations?

Good, replied Stephen, in a playful vein; you have come

back to yourself. But now let us try to get to something less negative than the opposition of principles which turn by turn destroy each other.

Agreed, I answered, but first let me tell you exactly where I am. I am on the side of liberty; there I pray God I may always be found; for there abides not only truth but duty. I believe that in the presence of science, reason, and conscience, I am compelled to be on the side of liberty; and, as I said but now, I shall always have this advantage over the advocate of the opposite principle, namely, that he has no arms against me whatever until he adopts my doctrine; so that already he is beaten and I am victorious. On the other side I do not conceal from you my feeling that the man of authority will make a powerful chord vibrate in us, as often as he sets forth our need of religious knowledge, and our manifest impotency to obtain it by our own endeavour alone. I then submitted to Stephen the practical difficulties of which I spoke in the beginning, and which I have felt specially in the duties of the pulpit and the pastoral care.

Right, replied he; and your present views were mine not too many years ago for me to understand you entirely. I will now report to you the steps I think I have set in advance, and you will confirm me in my experience if I succeed in causing you to share it with me. Yes, in religion we need something more than feelings, we need also knowledge. But what is the knowledge which we want? Have we a right to desire in this respect more than is necessary? And is not that which is necessary determined by the fundamental needs of our spiritual nature? Since religion is the development of an inborn tendency of the human mind, we are justified in expressing a want of religious knowledge only in the measure in which that want would prevent us from living as religiously as we are able. For the rest, welcome if it comes; but the

love of luxury is not legitimate, and that would not be a pure thirst of knowledge which extended to luxury; it would be an ill founded curiosity; which at least is not in its place except in science, and cannot, properly speaking, be an element of true religion. Man is not authorised to ask of God more than his daily bread. Thus let us for a moment suppose we know what is needful concerning God, God's relations with the world; concerning the soul, duty, immortality, salvation,—what is needful, I mean, to make such knowledge furnish to our religious life, motives, and a boundless field of development; with this we ought to be satisfied; and if, as theologians we lack system, logical organism, the light of psychological and historical observation, we are in the same position as the astronomer who studies the laws of the heavenly bodies, and who knows that his possible errors will not prevent the sun from giving warmth, the stars from giving light, the universal mechanism from accomplishing its course. I have then precisely knowledge enough to desire earnestly to penetrate further into religious truth, and to give myself up to my researches in full security as to results which may probably escape from me all my life. If, for example, I have the conviction that there is a God, the Infinite Father, to whose infinitely good will I ought to refer everything; who loves me, who has made perfection the aim for which I should strive; who wishes that I should be saved, and live for ever; a God who pardons in sanctifying, and sanctifies in pardoning; I repose on a solid spiritual foundation, and may be at rest in regard to everything else.

It seems to me, I answered, that you are giving an outline of fundamentals, but I see not how anything hence arises which bears on the question with which we are occupied.

Patience! We shall come to it soon. Let us observe that in general the question is very ill put between the friends

of authority and the friends of liberty. It would seem as if the question was, whether an individual man, without aid of any kind, consulting himself solely, absolutely limited to his own single strength, is able to deduce from his mind all the certainties required by his religious and moral nature. It is forgotten that man has not the option of thus sundering himself from his race. Whatever he does or is, he has received the impress of a tradition as old as the world. Do you think, for instance, that Descartes, Spinoza, Hegel, all the great and aspiring minds which have essayed to make the world anew, have not at every moment been determined by their predecessors and by the antecedents of human kind? In truth, the man of the strongest mind invents nothing, he only criticises the tradition in whose bosom he is born, and he modifies it for others in the degree in which his voice calls forth an echo in their hearts. Now, it is one thing to examine and simplify an already existing construction, and another, for a single man to form such a construction in all its parts. The very fact that our thirst for religious knowledge has acquired such intensity, results from a very ancient and multiform tradition. I fancy that the earliest human beings in the forests, in which our race passed its infancy, unconscious and yet virtually divine, knew little of either seeking or doubting.

In tradition then, you acknowledge our necessary instructor. But as you do not acknowledge its infallibility, I see not what you gain thereby.

Wait a little. That vague, indefinite quality which I call the tradition of human kind, is for us a real and concrete power, considered as Christian tradition. We find a presumption in its favour, without going beyond the fact that it is the most recent of all the great religious traditions. You know, do you not, that at the bottom Islamism is older than Christianity? It has never pretended to be a novelty, but

exclusively a reform, a return. It is a return to Abrahamic monotheism, effected by a people among whom it never ceased to exist in a latent state, and under the influence of an Arabian prophet, in whom were embodied the best qualities of the genius of his race. The Christian tradition ought to inspire in us a confidence greater than all other traditions, just as the judgments and ideas of mature age appear to us, and also are, more certain than those of our youth. Humanity resembles a man who is growing, and who, amid daily errors, makes constant progress in a knowledge of the world. Let us then limit our present examination to the Christian tradition. For now some centuries it has been subjected to a criticism at once suspicious and not easy to satisfy. The natural and legitimate tendency of that criticism consists in its continually drawing nearer to the centre, to the primary origin, to the essence of the tradition. Before the Reformation, they attempted to ascend the river of ages by putting episcopacy, collected in a council, above the pontifical power, itself an issue of episcopacy. At the Reformation, they, in right, went back to the New Testament, which, so to say, is the precipitate of the tradition of the first century ; in fact, minds were then already under the influence of the dogmatic tradition of the first five centuries. A consciousness of this opposition between the theory and the facts, has called into existence the theology which is properly called Biblical, in contradistinction to the doctrines of the confessions of faith ; the watchword of which is, the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. After this, criticism coming into the field, the teachings of the Bible itself making men own the duty ; theologians have gone back to Christ himself, and further they cannot go. Christ is a person, a person is indivisible, and this continual simplification of Christian tradition has found the point beyond which it cannot pass without deny-

ing itself. Such tradition is founded in right; for in the name of the same authority I may require every Christian to acknowledge only the authority of Christ who declares, You have only one Master (teacher) Christ, and all ye are brethren; this is the word of the author of the Gospel, a word which is found in his most certainly authentic discourses, in discourses most clearly marked by his personality. Accordingly, the sole decisive authority that can here be owned, the only authority that can be cited against individual resistances, the single thought that can serve as a rule to our thought, is the thought of Christ.

Here I suddenly interrupted Stephen. What do you say? I asked: are we not falling back into full dualism, as between eternal authority and conscience? Does not the dilemma I put forward but now return upon us, as strong against the authority of Christ, in matters of faith, as against that of the Bible or the Church?

That, ^l ~~can~~ only answered Stephen, I must deny, and you too will deny it, if you have patience to listen to me to the end. Be so good as in the first place to remember that Christ, while asserting his own authority, as he does in the text which I have just cited, and in many others, never acts and speaks as one who commanded faith. Never do you hear Jesus employ words which come to this,—What I teach you may be absurd, but believe it because I teach it. Far from that, his method, his constant method, consists in acting on men's consciences, in such a way as to lead them to acknowledge the truth of what he says. This is the reason why he either purely and simply proclaims the great religious and moral truths which he possesses, or indirectly brings his auditors to see as he sees. His parabolic preaching, his symbolic acts, his paradoxes, so striking and so spontaneous, have no other object. Why so? The secret of this, his constant method, you must seek in his

own person, in the way in which he himself had come to those sublime certainties respecting God and the things of God. Let us call to mind that our religious ideas depend less on our science and reason than on our spiritual disposition. Every spiritual state supposes a certain intuition of the spiritual world, just as every physical state supposes a certain impression of the external world. Now it was neither by a systematic education, nor by philosophic reflexions, that Christ arrived at his certainties. It was immediately, directly, it was by intuition, that he seized and saw spiritual things. That is natural. With us also, I repeat, a perception of things of the spirit depends on our moral and religious development—observe, I do not say on our theoretical and logical knowledge. A man who is very learned but not religious, and who is only moderately moral, will never succeed in proving to himself the truths which concern the soul, the world to come and God. Even the matter to be contemplated escapes from him, and he has no claim but to act like a blind man investigating the laws of light. Jesus, on the contrary, in the immaculate purity of his soul, not being disturbed by any selfish passion, saw and knew, knew infallibly, all those grand things which he has said to us respecting ourselves and our God. Probably, my dear friend, you have not yet appreciated at its just value a word, unique in our Gospels, and which I have never ceased to dwell upon since the day when first I understood it. You find it where it is said that Jesus, in traversing the villages of Galilee, was astonished at the unbelief of his countrymen (Mark vi. 6). Let us confess that with the knowledge which we have of the state of things and of minds in the Jewish people of his time, the opposite would astonish us. Yet, in the eyes of Christ, that unbelief was incomprehensible, just as you would not understand a person who should tell you that we are talking at midday, at this moment, when the

clock is about to strike eleven at night. In the same manner, Jesus marvelled that those, his fellow-townsmen, did not see, did not even suspect, that which he saw so clearly, felt to be so near, and apprehended so distinctly. The cause of that unbelief was altogether of a moral nature; so he declared to his contradictors in that well known word: If thine eye is sound, thy whole body shall be full of light; take heed, lest thine eye be full of darkness. He himself, refers to no other cause the clearness and the certainty of his declarations on that which he holds from his Father; the Father, says he, loveth the Son, and showeth him all that himself doeth, and what things soever he doeth, those the Son likewise doeth (John v. 19) Here again, the Son reveals the Father because his eye is sound and his look pure. In fact, God shows himself in every thing and to every body: the question is, are your eyes in a sound condition?

I think I begin to understand you, said I to Stephen. You mean that at the bottom, the authority of Jesus is not external relatively to us, in this sense, namely, that Jesus simply said what we should say ourselves, were our moral and religious consciousness as pure as his.

That is it, he answered, and if you set out from this principle you will find that all which Jesus has revealed to us of the divine world connects itself therewith in the most direct manner. Let us leave on one side all theology, Christ's sinlessness itself—which is but a scientific *postulatum*. Let us begin simply with the fact that Christ sways us religiously, sways us from an incomparable elevation,—with the fact that he is the one whom we must consult if we would know what human nature, at its highest degree of religious altitude, discerned in the divine world, on the borders of which he stood. Interrogate Christ then respecting God. He will answer you: God is our Father which is in heaven, who loves

us all; the Father, without whose permission, not a hair of our heads falls to the ground. Who told him that? His own pure mind, in the mirror of which God reflected himself as does the sky in a perfectly limpid sheet of water. A re-sense, like that of Jesus, perceives the infinite God and his absolute spirituality, as two immediate intuitions, intuitions which need not to be verified by reason. A sanctity like that of Jesus sees and knows God's love; and to it that a being who desires men to be holy, even as he is holy, does not love man infinitely, would be the most patent of absurdities. Look at the difference that exists between him and us; that difference depends altogether on the difference which separates our spiritual sense from his. Is it not true that, if at any time we feel our assurance of God's love vacillate in us, it is when we see the apparent indifference of nature in regard to our destiny and the state of our minds? Whether man does good or does ill, whether he is happy or unhappy, whether he comes into existence or goes out of it, nature pursues its regular course without one moment of sympathy. Not the less does the sun shine, the rain fall, than nature seems to us a huge machine, which rolls on in no way caring for the poor creatures that are seized, lacerated, or crushed by its ponderous wheels. This is the impression which is made on the least religious man. On the other side, look at Jesus. He too, like us, recognises the ceaseless footsteps of nature. We see that the sight attracted his eye; not, however, to raise in his mind the question how he was to bring into agreement his daily experience with his sight of the infinite love—to his eyes the latter is not less evident than the former—but solely to ask himself what results from a state of things such as God wishes it to be. And then what a sublime consequence he deduces! There he finds a permanent revelation of God. There he learns that we should do as does God who makes

his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends his rain on the just and on the unjust. He draws an analogous inference from the phenomena of the regular germination of plants, thus giving us a sublime view of the unity of the creator's plan in the moral and in the physical world. Yet another thing. Jesus never had in his mind the least notion of what we, in our metaphysical discussions, call the transcendence and the immanence of God. Nevertheless, the two realities are found in his discourses. With him God is above the world—he is in heaven; but he is also in the world; he is on the earth, where he ever works; in the sequestered chamber, where he sees him who prays in secret; he clothes the grass of the field; he communicates himself to every one by whom he is sought; and specially is he in us by his Holy Spirit, and in the clear and definite sentiment which Christ has of his intimate and permanent communion with God, he tell us that God is in him as he is in God. Moreover, Jesus does not argue in order to establish all these things; he tells us these things because they are, and because, did you rise even in thought, to his altitude, you would see that they are as clearly as he. As to immortality, Jesus sees it as distinctly, and as positively as we see our actual existence. The reason is, that at a certain height of moral and spiritual life, immortality is evident; and here is the cause why it is so difficult to prove it to those who stand low in the religious life, or who think that they ought not to believe unless they can prove it logically. Jesus knows that a man loved of God cannot perish. We survive the destruction of the body because God is *our* God, and because our immortality has the guarantee of his eternal life. Here is the ground of his fine reply to the Sadducees, in which you hardly know which to admire the more, the simplicity of the argument, or the depth of the thought. Observe, especially in Mark, with what firmness of

tone, and what calmness he declares to the Sadducees that they "greatly err (Matt. xxii. 29; Mark xii. 24, 27). As to salvation, Jesus draws from his own sanctity the assurance that his Heavenly Father is ready to forgive, and that it is his will all men should be saved. As a theory of redemption he has left us the parable of the Prodigal Son. And all this he every day proclaims with serenity, in presence of the greatest sinners.

I confess, that this way of presenting the authority of Christ made a lively impression on me. I began to discern a crowd of consequences which had never before entered my mind.

Yes, replied he, after a moment's silence; it is on this account that Jesus spoke with that authority which charmed the people, that same people who yet saw in him nothing more than a country rabbi, and whose traditions and traditional authorities he overturned. Let us take counsel of our own experience. Is it not true that in certain moments of our life, when we have lost some dear friend, when we have borne trouble in a Christ-like spirit, when we have devoted ourselves to some good object or to some person,—or when we have witnessed some fine act of self-devotement—a simple, noble, generous act, the sight of which moistened our eyes and quickened the pulses our heart, is it not true that, in those blessed moments, the grand truths of the gospel acquire in our minds a degree of power, clearness and evidence, which they do not possess in ordinary moments? Do we not then specially apprehend God, lay hold on eternal life, and believe in our own immortality? And whence come the radiant certainties which so often illumine the countenance of the dying, when the other vital functions are already enfeebled? Is it not that then, already delivered from the load of earthly things, as the parting moment comes nearer, the soul puts forth

form herself powers hitherto unknown, hidden till now in her own depths, which gradually unfold and blossom under the rising sun of eternity? We shall understand the authority of Christ when we know that those saintly flowerings of the soul which are ours but for an instant, and in a slight degree, were the constant experience of Jesus, and that in consequence, his eye was fully open on the unknown world, on the borders of which we live, and where he saw marvellous things, unknown to all by whom they have not been learnt by him.

Thank you, Stephen, for your excellent lesson, I said to my friend. Once more you have rendered to me the service of explaining and making definite a crowd of things which were in a chaotic state in head. I see how, in your point of view, to submit to the authority of Christ is, at the bottom, only the best way of realising our liberty, that is, that in receiving him as the revealer, because he is pure and holy, we believe simply what we should ourselves see, were we as pure and holy as he. Consequently, the more we grow up toward his spiritual altitude, the more we rise into the regions which he has traversed before us, the more clearly and fully shall we see what was seen by him. Here, however, I meet with difficulty. Christ, it appears, becomes our revealing authority by disclosing to us that which is seen and known in the world of mind, by one who has reached the highest moral and religious development. Does it hence follow that we ought to receive as revealed truth, and as having a right to our credence, the theological forms under which his thought of necessity expressed itself, in order to be apprehended?

By no means, replied Stephen. Christ is all intuition, all spontaneousness; but he is not a theologian, he is not a philosopher. We are not at liberty to reproach him with having given to his religious thought a scientifically defective expression, any more than with not having had our anatomical

or chemical knowledge. Permit me a comparison. It will not be a reason, but it may aid me to illustrate the reason of my remark. Suppose that the atmosphere of the earth was constantly foggy, so that we saw the sun and other heavenly bodies but very dimly. Nevertheless, we should see them sufficiently to desire to see them better, and to study their nature and movements. Now, there is only one mountain which ascends beyond the regions of mists, and the only person amongst us who is able to climb to its summit, has an excellent eye, exquisite good sense, a character above all suspicion, but he is not an astronomer. What is to be done? Forego profiting by his piercing eyes and good sense? Absurd. Write down all he reports touching his observations and impressions, and then make them into so many astronomical formulae? Absurd again. What you must do, is carefully to collect his observations, and to interpret them by the light of science. The criterion of these interpretations will be their coincidence, more or less exact, with the original observations. If, for example, the observer said there was a group of stars situated toward the east, and if the calculators know not what place to assign to the group in their map, it is clear that their calculations are false. If the observer asserts that the higher you ascend, the more the rays of the sun lose their heat, the astronomers might call in question the justness of the expression; nevertheless, their theories must adapt themselves, so as not to suppose a degree of heat increasing in proportion as you rise from the earth. Let us apply this comparison to some dogmatical points. It is possible that evil, with its pervading contagious potency, may have appeared to the thought of Jesus under the features of the Satan of tradition, although the heart was with him the true source of sin. We are free to modify this form, but not to deny the substance of Satan, the evil, sin, but for which

Jesus would never have spoken of Satan. It is possible that our reason is unable to reconcile the immanence and the transcendence of God, both of which are certainly reflected in the teachings and the consciousness of Jesus. This, however, is certain, that every view which confounds God and the world, and every view which sunders God from the world, is incapable of being applied to the immediate sentiment, so pure and so vivid, which Jesus had of the Infinite Father. It is possible that in regard to eschatology, Jesus had not altogether broken with the popular representations (though he does so in the degree in which those representations are materialistic and selfish) but every doctrine which should deny a conscious and individual immortality, or the idea of retributory judgment, would be too narrow to exhibit the thought of the Lord, and would thereby denote that it did not contain all which exists in the religious life of the true man. In a word, let us not ascribe to Christ the title of "doctor of divinity"—an honour he has never sought—but let us leave to him that of a religious teacher, to which he has a full and undoubted claim. For is he not the Christ? the anointed of God? he who has the spirit of God? that spirit which has never dictated a system, and which none the less leads into all truth.

Thus authority and liberty are harmonised in Jesus Christ, first because we simply obtain in him by anticipation an intuition of spiritual things, which will become our own in proportion as we rise toward him; and then because that intuition itself is not necessarily bound to the dogmatical forms with which it clothed in the words of Jesus, as historically transmitted to us. But, added I, after a moment's reflexion, may not one refer the other traditional authorities to an analogous point of view?

That is impossible, replied Stephen. Can you become a book? Can you become a Church? Do you not see that

only a human being can become to us an authority which is at the same time our liberty? Besides, the formulæ contained in a book or decreed by a church, the moment you have their authority on the simple fact that they are written in a book or prescribed by a church, the moment you no longer find them in your own experience, the moment you have not sight to distinguish between the letter and the spirit, become a fixed law, admit of no modification, and carry with them all the difficulties and impossibilities of arbitrary and external authority. On the contrary, let us preach to the multitude religious truth in the name of Jesus Christ, but let us preach it as it was preached by Jesus Christ himself, deriving, as did he, our authority from the truth of what we declare in his name. Let us induce the multitude to become great in character, and to rise toward Christ. Let us leave to Catholic priests the privilege of preaching a blind faith: while we remain sincere Christians and consistent Protestants. We lean on the Bible in preaching! And why not? What an excellent custom that which compels us never to detach ourselves from the great stream of religious life, which has its source in the cradle of mankind, which comes into view in Abraham, and which never after ceases becoming broader and steeper. The preachers of the present day, who are familiar with the criticism of the Old Testament, are too much afraid of thence taking texts. After all, the history which it contains is that of a people which continues to grow until it is in a condition to produce the Christ. Whatever brings it near or removes it from that marvellous destiny is the very thing which brings us near or removes us from God. In this point of view, there is in the Old Testament an inexhaustible mine of treasure, applicable to our moral and religious life. The New Testament, even on the outside of the personal teachings of Christ, is still the

direct echo of that creative word, and, inappreciable advantage! shows us the first rudiments and development of the Church. There we find Catholics in the Judaizers, a Protestant in Paul of Tarsus, a moralist in James, and one who hopes against hope in the prophet of Patmos. There we find an entire religious microcosm, which prophecies what the christian world will always be, having Jesus for its centre, in whom it ever renews its religious life. We have then the right to speak in the name of the Old Testament and the New. The sole precaution we need observe is to expound rather than prescribe. We shall soon be understood by the more enlightened members of the church, by whom aid will be offered to others. It is the duty of every christian to labour to raise others up to himself, that they may be able to rise to Christ. Besides, let us be trustful. As children of the light, let us be friends of truth, and let us love the truth too much not to follow it, whithersoever it leads; for never can it lead us away from duty, and a practical allegiance to duty forms the essence of the christian character. In our endeavour to follow Christ, let us begin with an unshaken confidence in goodness, the beauty and the power of truth, which lies at the basis of his life, and is the cause of his sublime self-sacrifice. Such a state of mind deserves to bear the name of him in whom it appears in perfection, and so to be called a christian state of mind. The past we will venerate, as did our master; without the past we should know nothing: we will also love the future; by whose favour, under God, we shall know everything.

But I perceive, he suddenly said, that we are shamefully passing the hour when decent people retire to their chambers.

Looking from the window, I followed Stephen with my eyes, as he walked toward the house where he received hospitality. The night was superb. The deepest silence reigned

in the streets, so animated during the day, of the town where I dwell. The stars shone with all their brilliancy. The moon played amid the cordage of numerous vessels anchored in the neighbouring bay, and which seemed as if they slept, soothed by the gentle stream of the Meuse. The opulent houses of the river banks proudly mirrored themselves in the softly moving waters. At a distance, the lamps of three railways threw forward their lights, while over my head passed those magic wires which, in the twinkling of an eye, carry a thought and a wish from Paris to London, from Vienna to St. Petersburg. It occurred to me that this populous and flourishing city, one of the centres of the commerce of two worlds, was, a few generations since, only a sheet of mud which every tide covered. The change has been effected, said I, by persevering industry, and certainly it is God's glory that his creature is able thus to transform his creation. But at what cost has man achieved this victory over nature? How many ineffectual efforts, disastrous inundations, fatal overthrows, separate the present moment from the hour when, for the first time, a man set foot on some dry spot in the ancient marsh. Nevertheless, no labour has been wholly fruitless in the long series of transitions; and had it thought and spirit, the meanest particle of earth might say, I too, I have had my share in the victory.

This reflexion carried me back to Stephen's closing words as to the duties we owe to our less instructed bretheren. Why should we doubt of the reign of God in men's hearts, any more than of the reign of man over the earth? The same objection which sloth or dejection would raise against the spiritual progress of our race, might, of old, have been equally well pleaded against the possibility of the material progress, the tokens of which I saw on all sides around me. And carrying my eyes to the starry vault, which seemed to smile

the smile of the Infinite Father, I felt that we also, in our humble sphere, ought to labour to raise the whole of our kind, without dwelling on disappointment in the past, and without evading our obligations under the pretext of inability. We owe our share of effort, mean though it may be, to the improvement of our kind—we owe it, as the river owes its tribute to the ocean whence its waters come; if only because, if we contribute our part to the continual ascent of our race, we are sustained and carried upward under its ceaseless beneficent influence.

Let noble man
Be helpfull and good !
Ever creating
The right and the useful,—
Type of those loftier
Beings of whom the heart whispers !

GOETHE.

OF THE NOTION OF REVELATION.

BY REV. A. GROTZ.

We propose to enquire into the meaning, and determine the real significance of a word often employed in philosophical and religious language, but to which different persons attach very different significations. This word is *Revelation*. Whatever be the interest, the philosophical importance of questions of etymology, we do not here speak specially of the sense of the word. We do not profess to write an article for a lexicon. Besides, there can hardly be, as it seems to us, any difference of opinion as to the word *revelation*. All will agree that wherever what has been concealed is uncovered, what has been hidden is manifested and made clear, there is revelation. On this ground there is no doubt, no difference of opinion possible.

But as soon as we set foot on religious, that is, on theological ground, difficulties present themselves, and constantly increase. The word is turned and twisted into every possible sense: it is made to express ideas the most diverse, and sometimes the most contradictory. Is it a question of fact?—or of doctrine?—Has there been but one revelation?—or do we reckon several? Is revelation given once for all, or is it successive? Is revelation at an end for ever?—or is it permanent and progressive? To one, revelation is a book, the letter; to another, a life giving spirit, a wide-spreading and irresistible current, traversing the world in all ages. One will distinguish between a direct revelation and a transmitted revelation: one will call it natural, another supernatural: one mediate, the other immediate: one restricts,

another extends the signification of the word. At first sight, all appears confusion itself, a real chaos. We propose to endeavour to clear up and to unravel a little these discordant ideas. This is not, we must believe, a mere piece of intellectual gymnastics, a vain and useless search: on the contrary, serious interests, both moral and religious, are affected by the solution of the question. In fact, according as we adopt one or the other signification of the word revelation, man is set upon a pedestal, or drawn through the mire, religion is conceived of as a doctrine, or as a life, as a system of authority, or as a free and spiritual development, as a collection of formulas, or as a regeneration of the soul, even to its lowest depths. And how many times, alas! has revelation been, nay, is, a word altogether void of sense. How many men are there around us to whom revelation, contrary to its etymology, reveals nothing and ought to reveal nothing.

Numerous as are the definitions of the word revelation, various as are the systems deduced from these definitions, it seems to us possible to arrange these systems and these definitions under two principal heads. Generally speaking, revelation is judged, and its true character and value determined, from one or other of two points of view, quite opposed one to the other, or, in other words, each exclusive of the other. 1.—In the one of these, the idea of authority is assumed as the basis—of authority conceived in its harshest and most severe expression. Man, say the supporters of this view, was created perfect; but he sinned, and from that time forth all was and is degraded and spoiled in him; his moral blindness is complete: there is no longer any soundness, any purity, in his spiritual nature! no longer any religious ideas of any value, any energy, any pure springs of action! To escape from this state of lethargy, this moral and religious death, he himself can do absolutely nothing; there is no longer in

him any affinity, any possible point of contact, for truth. When these premises are stated and accepted, the rest is naturally a matter of course. God is introduced in action, and in action of the nature of magic; he is really the *Deus ex machinâ*. Man is in the position of the slave of olden time. God is the master; he speaks, he orders, he dictates precepts and ordinances;—and man's part is to accept all with his eyes shut, without examination. We are indeed told that man cannot examine, and that if he could, he would only by examining offend God, for he would thus manifest his audacity and his ingratitude, and his doubts of the wisdom of his Creator. He is essentially a minor, absolutely passive; his spontaneity, his liberty, and his will, are annihilated; they have no power whatever to arrive at truth and goodness; these faculties are only recognised as powerful in the cause of error and of evil. Hence it follows, with absolute necessity, that revelation is essentially external; its power over man, arising from its origin, and from the truths which it contains, is such, that he must take it as it is, as a whole, on trust. Revelation is in this case a law, a decree. Logic has even compelled the defenders of this view to assert that we can do nothing for our salvation, or to prevent our perdition, these things having been ordained from all eternity, independently of our conduct and of our will. Can we accept such an idea of revelation? Will it endure the test of a candid and serious examination? We think not. This idea, which takes its rise in the absoluteness of God, makes of no account the real needs of the human soul; cares not at all to study our spiritual nature, disdains and despises all ancient civilisation, the efforts of the sages of pagan times; in a word, all human preparation, all human influence is wilfully set aside. And again, as to the question whether facts agree with the logical data, whether they suit the results of the system, no

possible attention is paid to this; the system is complete, and must be taken as it stands. "External authority," writes M. Secrétan, "can never induce the disciple to assimilate its teachings with himself, because the very premise upon which the necessity of external authority is founded, excludes the possibility of such assimilation." 2.—In the other, the abstract idea of liberty is taken as the basis—of liberty conceived in its most absolute sense. Man alone, with his faculties, his necessities, and his desires, is taken into the account; the belief appears to be that he is alone in the world. His spontaneousness of action, his liberty, are regarded as the only rule, the only motive, the only possible instrument of revelation. Let man examine the universe, let him descend into himself, let him study, let him enumerate his faculties and their laws, and let him energetically reject all which seems contrary to his nature and to his faculties; this is his right, it is his duty. From this point of view all is made to give way to human liberty. Revelation is nothing more than the progress of society, the work of humanity, the development of the powers of the human mind, in a word, civilisation. No more law! no more limit! no more authority! Man is sufficient for himself, he is his own law, his God, or to express it in few words, humanity reveals itself to itself. Can we accept such an idea of revelation? Will it endure the test of a candid and serious examination? We think not. Evidently here again, no regard is paid to facts or to reality; here again, the study of the faculties and of the needs of the soul is not complete. God remains outside of man, he is excluded from his life, he plays no part in the development of his soul: whence it follows that the very notion of revelation is lost. From the other point of view, we saw nothing but God; here we see nothing but man: and from each of these points of view, something is left out of sight; on the one hand, the real

action of God, nature itself, and on the other, the real wants of man and his most glorious powers. "No one can pretend to have himself discovered the secret of all things, without deifying himself, or at least without regarding himself as the last limit of progress, which is not becoming to any one." The struggle has long been between these two points of view, between these two systems, and in our own days, the contest seems to be more serious than ever, and to threaten to urge each party into extreme views.

But is it not possible to take up a third position? Can we not conceive of a revelation, which should be at the same time authority and liberty, which should unite, melt together these terms into a living reality, which should take what is good and true from each of these exclusive systems, and should reject all errors and exaggerations of both? Let us consider the case: the question is certainly worth the trouble.

In the first place, before entering upon the subject itself, we have to put and to answer the question, Is a revelation possible? We answer in the affirmative. We take for granted the existence of God, of a personal God, the Creator; we have therefore before us two terms, two beings, God and man. We are not now called upon to examine what is exactly their relative position, what is the nature of these two beings. We ask only if there is any impossibility in conceiving of some sort of relation between God and man, impossibility to conceive of action on the part of God upon this world and upon his creatures, impossibility on the part of the latter to be conscious of this action. Neither need we here examine the nature or the direction of divine action. The question for us may be stated in general terms: "Cannot God, who has created man, act upon him, and manifest himself to him, directly or indirectly?" Who would dare to maintain that this is impossible? It would be necessary at the same time

to maintain that creation is impossible, to close one's eyes to all evidence, or to deny God. From the moment that you admit, that you take for granted God and man, God the Creator, man the creature, you take for granted, by this very fact, relations between God and man. As soon as any thing exists besides God, there is revelation, for there is manifestation. The idea of a God, the Creator, and of revelation are correlatives. But the question becomes much clearer by studying with ever so little care, the nature of man, his situation, his faculties, his necessities. It is not possible, we are aware, to conclude logically of the reality of anything because it is merely possible: but a glance at our own nature will immediately conduct us from the possibility to the necessity of revelation. Not many remarks will be required.

It is matter of universal experience that there is, at the bottom of the heart, a feeling of dependence. Man does not feel himself alone, as a spiritual, free, loving being. By a wonderful instinct, he feels, he guesses, he affirms the existence of a Being, at first very indistinctly defined, but the thought of whom pursues him in all times and places. If he examine his own thoughts and feelings, he hears a voice, he is conscious of wants and wishes. The voice is commanding, and will be obeyed: the wishes will be satisfied, and this is the condition of his happiness. This feeling of dependence, it has been truly said, is the basis of religion: and this may be said to be the side of authority, of what is imposed on man. But there is more than this in man. He feels himself dependent upon some Being: but he desires also to approach him, he aspires to know him, to remove the mysterious veil which hides him from his sight, to seize upon him with all the powers of his soul, to be united to him. On the part of God there is action, since he has put into the human soul desires, wants, laws; and in the same manner, man aspires to re-act on God, he even

feels the necessity of so re-acting. This may be said to be the side of liberty, of spontaneity. But here we find a strange phenomenon, an afflicting spectacle. God acts, man does not re-act as he ought; God speaks, man does not answer, does not wish to answer; the harmony is interrupted. "The mysterious cable, which connected the vessel with the port, is broken," and the vessel, as without helm or compass, is driven about at the mercy of the wind, over a sea filled with rocks and shoals. Man's ideal, man's object, as he feels and as he asserts almost by instinct, should be the intimate and living union with, and the knowledge of God, the satisfaction and development in God of all the wants and wishes of the human soul. But is it so? No. Man is in a strait between the voice of conscience and his own passions. The feeling of dependence weighs upon him; He can only think of God with terror, for his violations of the moral law, engraven on his soul, are numerous, manifest, palpable. The consciousness of God in man, instead of being a joy, becomes a torment. And yet man, by an astonishing contradiction, has always a longing for truth, for justice, for holiness. The religious sentiment still exists—but what strange channels it chooses for its expression! Despairing of being able to seize this God, the thought of whom pursues him always, man will localise him, will make of him a statue, an idol, will place him in the stars, in certain physical phenomena of remarkable power. Despairing of realising the ideal of justice, of holiness, which his conscience feels, and to which he aspires, he will make a God for himself after his own standard. He has thought to seize upon God, to give a firm basis to morality: fatal illusion! God is destroyed, morality overthrown. I see the door opened to superstition of every kind, to the wildest exaggerations of the passions. Let us recognise the fact, man is in a false position—he is *fallen*. How can this situation be explained? Could

God have been deceived? can he have failed in his work? Who would assert this?—Not wishing, not being able to sacrifice God, we explain to ourselves the present state of humanity by a fall, by a falling off. Not that we understand the manner in which this fall could have taken place: the logic of facts, observation of moral phenomena, and the religious sentiment lead us to it, force us to it.

It has been said that God revealed himself to the first man; and almost all nations speak of an age of gold at the origin of all things. This primitive revelation is said to have been complete and perfect. But what is meant by this? Let us endeavour not to be satisfied with words, and let us not allow ignorance, the spirit of system, or the rule of taking for granted to hide themselves behind mystery. Does this mean that man had arrived at an adequate notion of God? that he had the real formula of God? that he possessed those metaphysical and transcendental notions, which we now only approach with an inward shudder? We candidly confess that we do not comprehend such a revelation, it appears to us even impossible. Does it mean that the will of man was in harmony with the Divine will? This we can conceive and grant. Such a harmony does not exclude progress, development, an intellectual conception more and more accurate and true of our relations to God. It is in this agreement more or less durable of the human will with the Divine will, in this still unstained and untarnished religious feeling, that the primitive revelation, according to my view, manifests itself. The fall is the revolt of the will, is that man constitutes himself outside of God, taking himself as the basis and ultimate object. It is supposed, commonly enough, that the first man had a number of ideas and notions, which, since the fall, have been lost from his mind. Such a supposition is inadmissible. In fact, it is not the intelli-

gence which is obscured, so much as the will which has become enervated and rebellious. Could it be that these notions made men religious or pious? It is possible to discuss learnedly God and his nature, it is possible to define these points in very exact terms, and yet to live without God, to have no real and living communion with the Creator. Man is fallen, this is a fact. But what does this mean? That there is no longer in him any possible point of contact with truth, no longer any affinity for good, no longer any bond of union possible between him and God? that everything in the human breast is necessarily evil, and fatally depraved? Is the image of God totally effaced? are all those faculties, which, according to Calvin, ought to make us regard man as a "mirror of the glory of his Creator," annihilated? But then man could be no longer man, and what could mean his ardent aspirations, his desires and regrets, the hunger and thirst of his soul? Joy and sorrow, peace and remorse could only be vain words, chimeras or phantoms. "There is no doubt," says Calvin (Inst. lib. I. c. 15.) "that Adam, fallen from the happy state in which he had been created, did infinitely remove himself from God, by his revolt. And therefore, although we confess that this image has not been entirely annihilated and effaced in him, yet, etc." Certainly no one will accuse Calvin of exaggerating the value of the natural man. By the very fact that man has a consciousness of God, whatever be the feelings that this consciousness calls into action, it is proved that there is a possibility, and, I add, a necessity for reunion. Man is fallen—well: but, and it is here that there is hope that he may rise again, he has consciousness, he can have consciousness of his fall. The feeling of imperfection, of weakness, of corruption, may become, and does very often become, a condition of progress. What is needed then is not a creation in the proper sense of the word; the individual would then disappear, and with the

individual, the true moral basis; no, the individual personality remains, and must always remain: it is a conversion, or a regeneration which has to be effected. Man, who has to a certain extent allowed God to escape from him, must seize upon him again. Here as we understand it, is, and here ought to be, the work of a revelation.

It may be asked here if the natural development of the energies of the human soul would not suffice to bring man to the point which we have indicated. Let History and Anthropology answer: in our opinion, they answer in the negative. Without doubt there is at bottom an agreement between religious truths and our spiritual nature; without doubt, truth is made for man, and man in his turn is made for truth: but we have to remark that the question is here less of a combination of true ideas than of a change of heart and of will. Men of our days are born amidst circumstances continually richer in knowledge and in acquirements. I grant it. But is the basis of human nature, its nature itself, that which constitutes its essence, in any degree different? Is the point of departure different? Are our wills born more pure, more upright, more holy? No one would probably maintain this. On the other hand, consider from a moral point of view, or as regards religion, the barbarous populations, say of Oceanica: consider what is their idea of God, of man, and of his destiny. For ages they have been going through the same circle of ideas. The religious sentiment has degenerated into superstition, and has created an authority, arbitrary, absurd, and puerile; and liberty, not resting upon the divine, has become licentiousness and immorality. Whence we may also derive the following hint: that upon the ground of religion and religious teachings, the people, the masses go for nothing, do not act directly: it is the individual

we must study, it is by the individual that the question must be decided. Let us therefore consider the individual.

We should now comprehend what is to be our point of departure in the matter under consideration. Feeling of dependence, desire of union with God. We suppose a man seeking God, desirous of union with him. Where and how will God manifest himself? Revelation is possible, it is necessary. What is it?—We would be as complete as possible, and leave out of sight no manifestation of the Deity.

In the first place, God reveals himself outside of man, in the *physical universe*. The very sight of a vast and rich plain, of the immense sea, of the starry night, of the wild glacier, has in it something that affects the mind. Is it necessary to insist upon this point? Always and everywhere such a sight has caused a thrill in some secret fibre of the human heart. The power, the grace, the order, the magnificent harmony, strike with never-failing effect upon man's mind. In accordance with the laws of his nature, he ascends from the work to the workman, from the creation to the Creator. See and admire the effect of nature on men as yet but little civilised, living under the blue vault of heaven. They have before them and they recognise it, an open volume, a volume of which every blade of grass, nay even the smallest insect, is a sublime fragment. Hebrew literature offers us some magnificent pages on this grand theme. Read for example the Song of the three young Hebrews from the 34th verse. I might quote numerous passages from profane authors and verses from the psalms, from the books of Job and of the Prophets, in which the powerful influence of the physical universe upon the human soul is well depicted.

God again reveals himself in *History*, in the progress of society, in literary and scientific development, in the trials and the conquests of humanity. It would appear as if each nation had

received special gifts for a special mission; as if each people brought its stone to the construction of the immense edifice. Some mysterious instinct agitates them and urges them on: events attach them one to the other, by closer and closer bonds. Can this be only a caprice, an accident? Can so many generations have passed away without result—can they have appeared and lived without end or object? Impossible. Each generation has had its task, its mission. The fire lighted the first day of creation has passed on increasing from age to age, from nation to nation. What discoveries! What admirable actions! What prodigies! What splendour! Soon, it may be permitted us to believe, no single nation shall remain outside of this great and irresistible current, which is carrying society along.

But if nature and history are a revelation, it is because there is something answering to them in man. In fact if man turns round upon himself, if he penetrates into the depths of his being, he discovers there a new manifestation of God; the external appearance of the universe, and the great facts of history are engraven upon the soul, and awaken there a crowd of feelings. One might suppose a hand as it were, gathering in and preserving these impressions from without. The universe speaks and conscience answers: there is reciprocal action, and re-action, authority and liberty. If there were nothing in man but a vegetative vitality, the impressions made by the physical world would be without result. But this is not all. There is in us, in the deep places of our being, as it were, a world apart, entirely internal, entirely spiritual. Brought to bear upon any action whatever, conscience speaks; according as man decides in such or such a way, conscience approves or condemns; it can distinguish between the just and the unjust, the evil and the good. And more than this, these distinctions are not mere abstractions. These notions assume form, they become incarnate. The true, the just, the beautiful, are con-

centrated into a single idea, or rather I should say into a single being—into God! If man fears when acting in opposition to his conscience, it is that he feels he has offended some one, a being, who is perfection itself, and whom he ought rather to resemble. This revelation of conscience and by conscience acting upon nature, upon history, and upon ordinary life, explains to us the elevated ideas some Pagans have entertained of the Divinity, their presentiments, their aspirations. Socrates and Plato are called by St. Augustine, the *precursors of Christ*. What impious breadth of thought, what audacious blasphemy, is there not in the language of the holy bishop, in the eyes of some who deny any preparation for the Gospel, in the midst of paganism! “We are in relation to God,” says Vinet (*Medit*, p. 158.) “what the moon is “in relation to the sun, reflectors only, but animated, sensible, “personal reflectors, appropriating to themselves the light of “God, reflecting it voluntarily, and shedding it abroad with “knowledge and intention. And yet reflectors, nothing but “reflectors! but how glorious for us to be so!”

We have just pointed out the instruments of *universal revelation*, and it appears to us easy to get at the results of this revelation as to the notion of the Divinity. God is manifested as power, wisdom, providence, justice, and holiness.

But it is evident, as experience proves and as reason acknowledges, that there is here some incompleteness, and consequently a difficulty. Nature, which reveals God, conceals him at the same time. The sight is so grand, so imposing, that it crushes man; the impression upon the senses is so lively, so direct, that the latter, may, by their excitement, weaken the spiritual faculties and trouble the conscience. And conscience itself, whilst receiving impressions and elaborating the great ideas of religion and morality, may weaken the one and alter the nature of the other; for it is fallen:

the mirror is not broken but it is singularly tarnished. Conscience may fall into deplorable aberrations. The will has become vitiated, capricious : and even if we suppose conscience to be perfectly upright and true, will the will always obey its commands? Let facts answer. The revelation of nature has been found to reduce man to the grossest superstition, or to a vague and enervating pantheism; the revelation of conscience has been found to lead to the most serious moral errors. But though there is this difficulty, it is not the less true that there is a *natural revelation*. Every manifestation of God, every perception of the Infinite in power, in justice, in beauty, in holiness, is a revelation. "That there is," says Calvin, (Inst. I. 3.) "in man a feeling of the Divinity, and that this feeling comes to him from his own powers and from a natural instinct, is a fact which we consider beyond all question."

This is however not all, this is not enough. What vagueness there is in this natural revelation! How fleeting are its impressions! If the imagination is struck; if reason is arrested, wonders, and is raised to more effective conceptions, man himself is not moved in the depths of his nature, and does not really seize upon the idea of God; all the wants of his heart are not satisfied; he is unceasingly in doubt between authority and liberty; his conscience often hesitates, and this because the revelation is above all things external. And here we pause to remark, that revelation thus far is nothing in itself magical or arbitrary, which shocks reason and conscience. Let us advance another step.

God manifests himself in man, or rather *by man*. It is certain that all are not born with the same gifts, the same character, faculties equally developed. If all are fallen, there are yet some whose conscience is more true, whose ideas are more clearly defined, whose moral sense is more delicate,

whose will is firmer than those of others. Further, these men already privileged by nature, have been placed in such positions, under the influence of such circumstances, that their natural dispositions have been happily and admirably developed. Solitude, retirement, contemplation, prayer, are some of the means which have served to raise them to a sounder conception of God, and to cause them to comprehend more fully the nature of man. These men, few in number, who have received special and extraordinary gifts, and who have been placed in specially favourable circumstances, present themselves to us as workmen of God. They have themselves a consciousness of their mission, and they accept it with so much energy that their mere personality seems lost in presence of their work. Do not these few words contain the lives of all the legislators of antiquity, of those sages and philosophers who have left their trace on the social improvement of their times, who have advanced civilisation, founded religions and empires? All certainly present themselves as charged with a special mission; they are inspired, that is to say, in direct relation to the Deity, who in the depths of their being, in the silence of the heart, dictates to them his will. In this capacity, they are clothed with absolute authority. They speak; the crowd listens, accepts, obeys. In the midst of a people, ignorant, rude, superstitious, blinded by mere material instincts, some religious authority is required, just as in the life of every man there is a period where a firm hand is required to restrain and guide. Is not this the sight which Moses and the people of Israel present to us? The Mosaic revelation is a law, it is essentially an authority. This, we must here remark, is the first form of revelation in history. As soon as we perceive a positive revelation, we perceive at the same time authority; in his religious education, man is at first treated like a child. And yet, leaving out of the question the marvel-

lous portion of the revelation of Moses, all that has to do with prodigies (an element, it must be admitted, which is found in all the older religions) what is left? To what is this Mosaic revelation reduced? Does it consist of truths, of ideas, such that men must accept them without understanding them, without being able to appropriate and assimilate them? Does authority here take for its object the compulsory reception and belief of the incomprehensible? What do we see? The unity of God, proclaimed loudly and pointedly. "Jehovah is the only God," is the fundamental dogma. Then a series of moral precepts (The Decalogue), then sacrifices, ritual ordinances, and civil laws. We do not now require to consider the ceremonial, civil or political portions of the Mosaic revelation. What is there then, we ask, which goes beyond man, which he cannot accept, which does not immediately find an echo in his soul? The unity of God? Reason accepts it, conscience brings us to the same conclusion. Remove the veil, appease the evil passions, dissipate errors and prejudices, and this notion of God becomes easily seized. Why then does Moses speak in the name of authority? Precisely because of these errors and prejudices which obscured and falsified the action of conscience: it was needful in some sort to do violence to men, and to impose upon them what was yet to be found in their own being. And, as to the moral precepts? Are they not in a similar position to the notion of Jehovah, the one God? Moses promulgated them by authority, by a revelation. In the midst of the moral darkness, the rude morality of his time and of his people, such precepts must at first sight have appeared strange: this was a revelation. But, in reality, what is there mysterious or extraordinary in these precepts? Absolutely nothing. Are they not in perfect agreement, in harmony with the conscience? The real laws of the moral

being were, in the shade, without effect : Moses, the legislator, promulgated and revealed them. This appears to be little : it is all.

One circumstance, however, seems to astonish us. There is one feature which characterises the Hebrew nation, and distinguishes it from all other nations of antiquity. Besides its notion of Jehovah, sole God, besides its moral precepts, *it has a promise* : it expects something, it waits for some one. It is not now the place to examine the history of this promise, the character of this expectation, the materialistic and carnal corruptions which were connected with it : but what is certain, what is attested by authentic documents, is, that the Jewish people lived in the future, in the expectation of a happier state, of a deliverer. This is surely a very special revelation : and still more remarkably, facts have proved the truth of this expectation ; the promise has been realised. But is this promise of which we speak at variance with the aspirations of the human soul, with the requirements of conscience ? On the contrary, it confirms the former, and satisfies the latter. The people are unhappy and suffer—they hope for, they see in the future, a reparation, a consolation, a salvation. What is there here strange or magical ? what more natural ? The law must soon have proved itself, to some souls at least, powerless, insufficient. In proportion as morality becomes purer, as conscience rises in power and effect, the authority of law must necessarily become weaker. There is a suspicion, a guess, that at least as to its historic form it is not to be eternal. Why should we not say that God revealed the future to a pure conscience, to a holy life ? We believe it and assert it. There were at the same time to be seen the results of the law, of the authority of the letter : formalism, increasing from day to day, and conscience stifled and falsified by casuistry.

We come thus to a fresh revelation by man, *prophecy*. The law, the letter was becoming obsolete, authority had become useless in certain respects, religious and moral truths were in danger of being corrupted, and of losing their influence upon life: the form, in a word, was almost overpowering the reality, when the prophets appeared. What an admirable part do these inspired men play in the midst of the Jewish people! They may be compared to a magnificent temple in the midst of ruins! Moses had proclaimed the law, given rules and precepts, regulated all the externals of public worship, all the actions of civil life. "A law," as has been said, "a precept, things so convenient to accept and so easy to break!" This law, imposed with absolute authority, treated man as a minor, exacted from him passive obedience. And therefore, notwithstanding its great value, its intrinsic excellence, it remained for him something external, something beside man and not in man, and any individual, at a given moment, might have accomplished all the law without being moral in the true sense of the word, without advancing one step in holiness. Did not the Pharisees even go beyond the law? And were they therefore more moral or more religious? Every law, every external authority, after having been in the infancy of the society or of the individual a support, becomes, unless counterbalanced by something else, at a certain point in the individual's development, a hindrance, and gives to life a false direction. Then the prophets presented themselves; they declared that the Eternal was not content with sacrifice, with external rites, with obedience to law alone. They are, amongst the Jewish people, the expression of conscience in its holiness and its purity. They tend to simplify and to spiritualise religion; they strive to bring it home to men, not in its form, but in its spirit; to express it, not in any given action or practise, but in the heart, and in the trust in God—in a free

trust, a free obedience. Themselves the representatives of conscience, they address themselves to the conscience of men, and cause its light to shine forth: and thus their teaching rests upon the true basis of the moral and religious being, the remains of the image of God. The image is obscured, almost effaced: their task is to restore it and bring it again to light. It is evident that to the prophets, man is capable of entering into direct relation with religious truth and with God. In the sublime pages of their writings we find proclaimed in words of fire, in tones which carry conviction, that the law is done away, authority is modified and dethroned: they proclaim the real nature of God, holiness, and love. What is there magical here? What is there mysterious in their teachings? No incomprehensible formulas! No transcendental notions! God intervenes doubtless; but not by creating extraordinary ideas, by developing unknown faculties. He intervenes by developing and sanctifying what in man is still in the germ, or is imperfectly aroused to action. The impression of this revelation by man must have been immense.

And yet on examining this point carefully, we find here also some weakness, at least some incompleteness. The point of view of the divine dispensation is yet limited; the prophets have not yet been able to escape entirely from the specialties of their age and of their circumstances, have not been able to entirely do away with the authority of the letter. The individual is more directly addressed; but he is not yet entirely emancipated. In fact it is the mass, the people of Israel, who suffer, who obey or who rebel, this people which is called to salvation, which expects the promise. Pagan nations can only arrive at the truth by becoming one with Israel: they must first bow themselves under the yoke of the law. Authority even yet represses and keeps down liberty, which is however alive and becoming active. And farther, this God who is love, is

foreseen, affirmed, announced, but can in no way be felt or realised. Do we not feel that prophetic revelation is here to a certain extent incomplete and contradictory? But this is not all. Holy as was the life of the prophets, firm as was their will, they had their weaknesses, their imperfections. The image of God was reflected from a surface, polished, it is true, but which had yet its dark spots. What the man was worth, the revelation was worth. But the man not being perfect, neither could the revelation be perfect. God forbid that we should strive to lower the merit, to make light of the influence of the prophets. We recognise the great value of their teachings, we bless their glorious mission: "they did the work of their time and of their position;" they prepared for and brought about the coming of the Messiah.

Light was about to appear. We are now close to the Gospel, and we are indeed anxious to arrive there. All that we have yet said is only preparation: we have as yet been only clearing the ground. In the gospel we have *the* revelation, the perfect revelation. It is given to the world by a man—but what a man—the perfect man, the Christ. Conceive of the purest holiness, the most exalted wisdom, the truest conscience, the most sublime intelligence, the most moral beauty, the most ardent and disinterested love—*increase and develope these conceptions—go on still further—still higher—you are at the confines of the moral and the religious world; you have reached the mysterious limit where humanity ceases and divinity begins; your eyes fail, your head becomes giddy:—and yet still Jesus is before you—his face shining with celestial glory, and pronouncing the words, "He who has seen me has seen the Father."* But is this possible? Has such a being ever existed? Let history reply. Did there appear, yes or no, a man having thus lived, and having a consciousness of this life, a perfect man, united to God in the depths of his

soul, living with God, in God, a man whose every word is the expression of truth, whose every feeling is the expression of holiness and love? Jesus *did* appear: the perfect man *did* live upon earth. And also, though no sage suspected this wonderful means, religious consciousness foresaw and demanded this: and this presentiment, this postulate of conscience, history gives us, history proves to be a fact. Come near to Jesus, and you will find the solution, inexplicable as it may appear to ordinary reason.

Let us endeavour, however, to give an account of this revelation: to ascertain how it addresses itself to man and acts upon his life.

Every manifestation of God, we have said, is a revelation, and every manifestation ought to awaken some echo, ought to find some answering chord in the depths of the human soul. The physical world manifests the power and the wisdom of the Creator. The laws engraven in our souls prove his justice and his holiness. With Moses, revelation tends more to become incarnate, to approach more nearly to man. It loses perhaps in extent, but it certainly gains in intensity. Revelation becomes more and more positive. The men, who are revealers, excel in religious life, in purity of conscience, all their contemporaries; their revelation presents itself as an authority. Authority is the educating means; it is like the bridle which restrains and directs. With the prophets, the horizon becomes more extended: the part which man takes becomes greater: his spontaneousness of action, his liberty become more developed; revelation tends to become more and more spiritual, more and more internal. It is no longer simply a ritual, a law, a precept; it is before all other things free obedience, submission of the heart, acquiescence of the will. Man, however, sees his ideal becoming better: he aspires to perfection: he wishes to seize upon God, to unite himself to

him in a living manner. Where can we find the bond of union? What is it?—Here Jesus presents himself: here must be placed the record of this extraordinary existence. Revelation is a life, and becomes a principle of life. In fact, what does Jesus preach? what does he announce? what does he do? He reveals to us at the same time God and man. How does he reveal God to us? By showing us in his words, in his actions, in all his personality, the most adorable qualities, and that quality which contains them all, holy love. God was partly concealed by the physical world; the impression of him was vague and confused: but now the veil is removed, and the impression becomes distinct, exact, fixed. The law and the precept remained outside of man: now the law has become incarnate, the precept has become life. The statue moves! It is no longer a cold and dead image: it is a man, a being who has a heart, who has arms extended to receive the sinner and the sufferer, a look to support him, words to console him. Yes, it is a man—but it is also a God. And how does Jesus reveal to us man? Again by his life, by giving to conscience a powerful and salutary impulse. Jesus was placed in the same condition as we are, and he has overcome, he has conquered the evil. He always obeyed the voice of duty, the voice of conscience; he always practised justice; he realised perfect holiness, he was love itself. The ideal of conscience is realised in him—nay, it is exceeded. The life of Jesus presents the most striking contrast to our own lives. It is light, the brightness of light, beside the deep and sombre cavern; or rather it is light penetrating into this cavern, and revealing all its windings. In his mysterious and living union of the divine and the human, Jesus may justly be called the Man-God. (*Revue Théol.* vol. v. p. 46).

We can already see what position Jesus assigns to man. It would be easy to determine *à priori*, but we prefer to re-

main upon historic ground, Jesus speaks to man, teaches him, exhorts him, sustains him. Is there then nothing in us capable of uniting with Jesus? To pretend this would be contrary at the same time to the data of common sense and of experience: it would be to make an absurdity of the words and of the life of Jesus, such as the gospels give them to us.

There is in us will, a vitiated will, I allow, but still will; there is in us conscience, a falsified or slumbering conscience, I admit, but still conscience; there are faculties, powers, affections, tending in different directions, often going astray, but which it is impossible to ignore altogether. In a word, we have instruments at our command, the use of which may be, and doubtless often is, fatal in our natural state, but which, in the dispensations of God, ought to aid in the development of our spiritual life, and the origin of which is divine. What does Jesus do, our living revelation? Does he reject or destroy these instruments? Does he say to man, "shut your eyes, accept without examination?"—Where, we would inquire, where does the Saviour require the rejection of the intellectual faculties?—Where does he condemn conscience, as such?—Where does he demand to find in his disciples, slaves, passive or voluntarily blinded beings?—That he should condemn the bad passions of man, that he should blame the abuse of liberty, the errors of the conscience and the will, I can understand: that he should require a change of heart, and should give to God a part and the principal part in this regeneration, I can also comprehend: but that he demands the annihilation of the human individual, I deny. What blindness to attribute to the gospel such impiety! Even the Law required justice: and therefore considered man capable of doing justice, or at any rate of discerning what was just. Two principles are to be distinguished in man. All serious moral philosophers have been struck at the same time by our

greatness and our misery. These two principles contend in us for mastery, and clash at every instant. Human weakness and the spirit of systems sees only either one or the other. Jesus acknowledges both and reconciles them; he re-constitutes, he forms anew the true man, created in the image of God. Jesus is authority, doubtless; his words, his actions, all his personality impress us vividly. It is impossible to approach him in a right spirit without feeling a deep, a marked influence in ourselves. But what is the nature of this authority? Does it contradict our intelligence? Does it commit it to an absurdity, to an unintelligible formula? Does it oppose itself to our conscience, to the requirements of our hearts, the aspirations of our souls? No! Jesus is authority, but a living and spiritual authority: he does not remain at the door, outside the soul; he enters, he establishes himself in the centre of our feelings, our affections, our will, and without destroying anything, he transforms and sanctifies all. Jesus is at the same time liberty. He brings this liberty, he gives it to us. "If the Son make you free, then are ye free indeed." He makes us free by the truth, by purifying the heart, by developing and strengthening all the energies of the human soul. "Every true belief," says Vinet, (and we add, every true feeling, every correct idea) "is on the path of the Gospel."—(v. *Revue Chretienne*, p. 231.)

But objectors insist, and say, "Revelation has no other object than to communicate to mankind transcendental truths, dogmas." But what does this mean? Are these truths things which we cannot assimilate to ourselves? And in that case, of what use to us is such a revelation? Such a revelation in fact would reveal nothing. Is it again only a formula to remember, a certain set of words to commit to memory? If this means, that, given the fact of the life of Jesus, each one has to draw from this life certain consequences, and to give to

these consequences a rational and logical form, nothing can be more legitimate. But it is not thus that it is generally understood. Most commonly revelation is taken to mean an assemblage of doctrines, of dogmas, which must be accepted *en masse*, such as they are, under the penalty of being excluded from salvation. To what then in ourselves, to what faculty, to what need of our moral and religious being do these dogmas address themselves? Let us be told once for all. And let us not be accensured of wishing to remove from revelation every appearance of the supernatural. Our views as to the person of Jesus and his work ought to free us from any reproach in this respect. What we attack is the magical, the extra-human, or un-human character, which many look upon as the strongest proof in favour of revelation. It has been said, and in our opinion with much truth—"the dogmas are only believed in after a belief in Christ." We are surprised besides at finding those very persons, who assert that all human faculties are utterly corrupt and absolutely powerless, making use at the same time of these faculties. If you would be consistent, at least make no use of them. Do not first affirm the fact of this radical corruption, and then make use of it to prove revelation. Beware! you are on the road to scepticism! Or rather, why do you not accept an infallible tribunal, to regulate and formularise everything? No more preaching! no more teaching! for what is the use of it? Catholicism at least is consistent. *Perinde ac cadaver* is the man of Ignatius Loyola.

Whence then come the most of these difficulties? From the fact that the question has been removed from its proper place, because between Christ and the human soul the letter has been interposed, because exactly the same force has been attributed to the living revelation, the written revelation, and dogmatic formulas, and these have all been placed

upon the same level. Is not this the explanation to a great extent, of the long struggle, of the endless contest between philosophy and revelation? Doubtless if the latter consisted of a number of formulas, the opposition might be comprehended. But even then opposition is only possible when the data on each side are clear and distinctly laid down. When on the one side, for example, on that of revelation, there is complete obscurity, a number of incomprehensible formulas, man can only give up the contest and acknowledge his incompetence—he retires altogether. But what then becomes of man and of life? There is no longer any life.—And is this the end of revelation? Can we accept this as its object? No one would dare to do so; and besides facts do speak, however much they may be kept in the shade. It is the heart of man which is bad. Change this heart, and the instrument you speak so slightly of will be found well adapted to its work. “Is it necessary,” as Vinet says, “in order to deprive man of injustice, to deprive him of himself?” *Essays*, p. 157.

Jesus himself wrote nothing. He feared perhaps, it has been said, the deification of the form. It is so easy for man to abandon the spirit for the letter. It was not till many years after the ascension that the principal facts of the life of our Saviour were set down in writing. Some among the most eminent of the early Christians developed and communicated in letters the ideas they had formed of Jesus, of his nature, of his relations to God and to man. At the end of a certain time there was a volume; a certain number of writings by different authors had been collected. In the fourth century the canon was closed under the especial influence of two celebrated teachers of the Church. This is the written revelation. I am wrong. The Old Testament was placed in the same category as the New; both have the same value; everywhere, from the first to the last line, it is God who speaks;

everything there is authority. Be it so ! And yet, if I find in this collection, things which offend my moral sense, which shock my Christian conscience, if I find narrow conceptions, confused ideas, material errors ? "No matter," I am told. "A revelation is nothing else than a collection of truth, of truths, true by virtue of their origin, and not by virtue of a detailed examination. The question is therefore to ascertain, not what we must admit *of* revelation, but where is this revelation." These words contain the essence of a well known system ; I add, that they contain also its formal condemnation. Let us speak plainly ; they express something monstrous. Revelation according to this can say yes or no ; it is true in the mass, it may be wrong in details. This is one specimen of the effects of authority invented by men ! God speaks to me, you say ; but is it to tell me things of which I can have no conception ? things which have no point of contact with my conscience, which I can in nowise assimilate to myself ? "It is always necessary," it has been said, "that the truth outside of us should be measured by the truth which is in us." But there is more than this. You contradict yourselves. "These truths are true by virtue of their origin." Surely then I must be allowed to examine their origin ; you allow me at least this right. And how can I discover the origin of these truths so as to confide in them ? What is more simple, more natural, and less daring, than to ascend from particular facts to general facts, to the cause ? Not so however ; this process may be good elsewhere ; here it is good for nothing. It is more natural to pronounce an absolute judgment on the whole without knowing anything of the parts ; to judge of the whole is more easy than to judge of the details. When the defenders of any system advance arguments like these, the system is condemned ; it has served its purposes.

The spirit of system appears, in addition, to pay but small

regard to history. Many years passed by before the writings of the New Testament were composed. Was there then no revelation then? The first generation of Christians had not the New Testament to strengthen their faith: this at least is certain. Were, therefore these Christians less pious than we, less attached to their Saviour, less living? Neither do the objectors do us justice. We do not reject the Scriptures: God forbid! They are for us too, an admirable, a necessary means of grace. We hold fast by the Bible, we love it, for to us also it is *the* inspired book. We desire only to see things as they are, and "he alone," writes A. Monod, "understands the Bible, who is able to separate the divine thoughts from the human framework which contains them." (*Jésus Tent*, p. 105). Jesus was long present in the midst of his disciples by the astonishing impression which he had made upon them, and by the preaching of the apostles. By degrees, a tradition was formed, legends took their rise, and went on multiplying. Many of the accounts degenerated under the influence of ignorance and of imagination. It was found necessary to fix the tradition, which ran great risk of being lost, or utterly corrupted; and thus the gospels were written "by men and for men." Was this the revelation? The revelation was Christ. These books are a testimony, the testimony of a living faith to the fact of a revelation: they are therefore the product, the result of this revelation. They relate to us—and in this consists, in our opinion, their value—the history of Jesus, they bring the soul into contact with the Saviour. For my own part, I read the sacred writers with admiration. I listen to them with respect; I have need both of their words and of their testimony; they are, from the external point of view, the source of my faith. But can they free me from the necessity of raising myself towards God by meditation and by prayer? Can they free me from the necessity of addressing

myself directly to the Saviour? On the contrary; they induce me, they urge me to this course. And did not Jesus promise to be with us till the end of the world? Is the spirit of God refused to us or withdrawn from us?—"I will not leave you comfortless"—touching and blessed words! "The highest revelation," says Neander, "is the personal communication of God to humanity." And Jesus is this revelation. In Jesus, the conscience of God manifests itself as a real existence in the depths of the human soul.

One word more. Having regard to the manner in which we conceive of revelation, and the influence it ought to possess, it will be easily understood what value we attribute to what are called external proofs, *prophecy* and *miracles*. We place these proofs entirely in the background. We admit that they are very proper to strike the imagination, and to strengthen in their convictions those who are already convinced. But in our opinion, they are not properly speaking proofs: they are the consequences of the idea which is entertained of Jesus, of his nature and of his mission. The greatest miracle is Christ himself. "Even if there were no prophecies for Jesus Christ, and he were without miracles, there is something so divine in his teaching and in his life, that all men must have been charmed." Do we reject the miracles and the prophecies? No, surely; we merely wish to put them in their proper place, to point out their real character. In our opinion, the Christian religion and truth must be the gainers by this course. What does life lose by it? What does that revelation lose, which acts upon the will and changes the heart? We cannot see that it loses anything.

THEOLOGICAL CONVERSATIONS.

BY EDMUND SCHERER.

1.—CATHOLICISM IS ONLY A BRANCH OF PROTESTANTISM.

The city which I inhabit stands on the side of a hill, the levelled edge of which forms a terrace. This terrace is my favourite promenade. The view extends thence over fine trees, fertile fields, the high banks of a river, and sinks down with a kind of voluptuousness on the graceful lines of the horizon. The advanced season of the year had, it is true, stript the nearest plains, and already the snow whitened the mountain tops, but a slight hoar frost covered with harmony the whole district which it half veiled. A friend and myself had for an hour or so been walking up and down in the principal path, with a somewhat rapid step for the sake of getting warm, and while carrying on a conversation, throwing our eyes frequently over the beauties of the scene. It was Catholicism of which we spoke. My companion defended its beliefs with a conviction which did not exclude a scrupulous good faith in the choice of his arguments. He is one of those rare men whose religious principles are too firm and too sincere to decline free discussion.

Our controversy threatened to become prolix. I wished to shorten it. Let us end, I said to him, with what we ought to have begun. Give me a definition. What is Catholicism?

Catholicism is at once, revealed religion and the Church instituted by Jesus Christ—Catholicism is Christianity.

Take care, I replied. Your definition takes for granted the very point in dispute. It expresses the opinion which

the Catholics have of Catholicism :—that and nothing else. Would it not be possible to obtain a more impartial statement? For example: might we not say that Catholicism is one of the forms in which Christianity has realised itself on the earth? one of the great systems among which Christians are divided? In this way, we should pay regard to all rival pretensions, and avoid deciding between Rome, Geneva, and the Synod of Dort.

What! rejoined he, do you not see that under the pretext of being impartial, you become sceptical? By taking up a position on the outside of the Churches, you place them on the same rank, as if they could all be at the same time in the truth. You wish to arrive at an objective definition, as the phrase is, and, in reality, you only substitute your own subjectivity for mine—the definition of one who is indifferent, in place of the definition of one who believes. In my turn allow me to put a question to you; Do you believe in the existence of truth upon earth?

I do not very well see what you mean. Do you mean that truth is a person or a thing occupying some particular spot on the face of the globe?

Right; the expression I used is at once too abstract and too metaphysical. Well; tell me if you believe in the distinction of the true and the false.

Assuredly.

And the true is better than the false? Is not the first, man's highest good, the life of his soul; while the second is its death?

Without doubt.

And has God done nothing to secure that good to men?

Go on; I have no wish to contradict you.

Let us then take another step—is Christianity true or false?

What Christianity? there are several you know.

Yours, if you like, he replied with some temper. Pray let us for a moment, leave on one side objections of the kind. I repeat my question—do you believe Christianity true or false?

I regard it as true.

And, he asked, do you believe that Christianity saves men because it is true, or that it could be equally divine, equally holy, equally powerfully over the soul if it were false?

Certainly not; I consider that the true and the good are one.

God who gave men Christianity, desires that they should have a knowledge of it?

Granted.

And not only that they have a knowledge of it, but should that they should have a knowledge of it exempt from error? Since otherwise Christianity would have ceased to be the truth, that is to be Christianity and the salvation of the world.

I understand you, I replied, you think that Christianity is not only truth in itself, in the thoughts and in the words of Christ, for instance, but equally in its earthly manifestation; according to you God has acted so that it is free from error; he has devised a means by which all men may have an exact acquaintance with it. In a word, you believe in absolute truth on the earth, at least in the religious order, and that absolute truth is with you Catholicism.

Precisely.

Very good: and I return thanks to the chances of discussion which thus conduct us to the heart of the question debated between us. Indeed I have long regarded a pretension to the absolute as the very foundation of Catholicism. But let us not rest in words; let us try to lay hold of the things which are behind the words they wear. Permit me then to ask what you mean by absolute truth.

Truth, perfect and unmingled with error.

Excellent; but truth itself—how do you define it? We agree, I believe, in acknowledging that it is neither a person, nor a substance, nor any entity whatever. What is it then? It is, I think, defined as the agreement of thought with the object of that thought.

Nothing could be better. Truth then is not in the object itself, but in the thought which I form of the object. A body is what it is, a fact took place as it took place; the knowledge which I have of it changes nothing in it, but that knowledge itself may be exact or inexact. In a word, what is true or false is my thought or notion of facts, my conception of things.

I grant it, he said.

Consequently, when you speak of absolute truth you mean a state of mind absolutely conformed to the nature of things, and when you say that Catholicism is absolute truth, you mean that Catholicism is the one adequate conception of Christianity, a religion entirely conformed to the teaching and institution of Jesus Christ.

He inclined his head in token of approval. I continued.

Again, let us beware lest we are misled by words. Nothing is so misleading as abstract terms. We speak of the conception of Christianity, but that conception supposes a subject. Let me explain. The Catholic notion of Christianity must be formed in some human intelligence. Well, where am I to look for it? Who is the depositary?

The Church.

Another abstract term! What is the Church? Do you speak of the *teaching* Church?

Doubtless.

What! do you ascribe infallibility to all the clergy? Is every priest free from error?

No; but the representative Church, the pope and the councils.

Well; I will not press you on that point. I will place infallibility where you like—in the councils, presided over by the pope, in the councils themselves, in the pope alone—it is all the same to me. Let us place it in the pope. The absolute truth then of which Catholicism boasts consists in this, that the pope has of Christianity a knowledge exempt from error.

Add, that this conception of Christianity, as you call it, is, at least in part, already fixed in the works of the fathers, and formulated in the decrees of the Church.

Let it be so. But why, I beg, does the Catholic Church attach so much importance to the possession of absolute truth and to the infallibility which guarantees its possession?

Do you put such a question? asked he, with some warmth. Because it is only truth that saves; because truth is life, as you yourself have acknowledged. Nothing indeed is less arbitrary than the necessity of orthodoxy to salvation.

I expected that reply. Now, see what my difficulty is. God is substantial truth. Jesus Christ, if I dare say so, conceived of God in an infallible manner. The pope, in his turn, reproduces the conception of Christ in an equally infallible manner. But what are we to say of the conception of the pope's conception? the interpretation of the interpretation? are they equally infallible? The teaching Church received the deposit of absolute truth, not for herself, but to communicate it to believers—are those believers equally infallible? If they are not, does not the absolute truth become relative? that is to say, imperfect and mixed with error? does it not of necessity undergo that change in entering their minds? How then can it save them? And if it saved them, notwithstanding the relative character it has received, why should it not save the heretic as well? the Protestant, for example, whose errors, beyond a doubt, are mixed with some truth? I do not see why infallibility is

necessary to the pope, if it is not necessary to the bishops, the priests, the faithful; if a believer may do without it to receive the teachings of the doctors, why may not the doctors do without it when they have to comprehend the teachings of Christ?

My companion did not reply immediately. He had the air of suspecting some weak point in my reasoning. In a moment or two I resumed.

You will never get out of that difficulty. Infallibility is necessary everywhere or nowhere. The apostles were infallible in interpreting the doctrine of Jesus Christ; the Fathers of the Church were infallible in interpreting the teachings of the Apostles; the Councils were infallible in determining the sentiments of the Fathers;—still you have gained nothing, unless the bishop is infallible in explaining the councils to the parish priest, nor unless the parish priest is infallible in transmitting to me the explanations of his bishop: while I too must be infallible to apprehend the words of my parish priest. I defy you to show that the truth runs less risk of alteration at one point of this transmission than another. Make your choice in this dilemma—you go too far or you do not go far enough. You pretend to absolute truth, and had you it, it would be of no use to you; where is the good of beginning with the absolute, only to forthwith fall into the relative?

We walked up and down for some time in silence, endeavouring on both sides to get to the pith of the matter. This lasted two or three minutes. Then I went on.

It is easy to verify absolute truth. The existence of the unconditioned (as the philosophers call it) in a world where all the rest is relative, limited, conditional, must be recognised at once. It is a miracle, a standing miracle, a miracle which could not fail to mark itself broadly out from purely natural

facts, such as those of which history commonly consists. We have tested the Catholic hypothesis by examining how it solves the problem, for the solution of which it has been invented. I wish to continue the application of the test by carrying the hypothesis to its immediate and legitimate conclusions. For a long while the phrase, "absolute truth," has appeared to me synonymous with this, truth absolutely Evident; I mean that one of those attributes implies the other, that the second is the inseparable correlative of the first. What is your opinion?

What do you mean? What is evident? The truth of the Catholic doctrine, or that particular truth that the Catholic Church is infallible and its doctrine absolutely true?

Both, I replied. The two things are but one. You will not deny that the Catholic doctrine is summed up in the dogma of infallibility—that is to say, in the belief of the absolute nature of its doctrine. Tell me then what you think of it? do you think that the possession of absolute truth by the Catholic Church is evident—self-evident?

No; but explain yourself.

I say that if this privilege is not self-evident, it ought to be so; and that such self-evidentness is a necessary corollary, a consequence, perhaps not perceived, but inevitable, a logical element of the Catholic system. You believe that the Catholic Church is the depositary of absolute truth; how do you know that? Tell me.

By the Church herself; or, if you will, by Jesus Christ and the Apostles, who founded the Church.

Impossible! Clearly we are in a vicious circle. The testimony of Jesus Christ, of the Apostles, of the Church, forms part of that very truth whose character we are enquiring after; the reality, the sense, the value of that testimony depends on the value of the doctrine of the Church—that is

it depends on the very point which is in question.

It remains to be ascertained, if it is possible to avoid a vicious circle in such a matter.

We must do so at any cost, and we can do so only on one condition; it is, that the point of departure is unquestionable. Here then we are at the thesis which I wish to establish. Catholicism is nothing if it is not unquestionable. It must rest on an axiom, and that axiom can be nothing but itself, its pretensions or its right, its absolute character. But here I touch on another consideration. Let us for a moment leave Catholicism on one side. Do you know any other absolute truth in the world?

Doubtless; mathematical axioms, and in morals, duty.

And how do you know that these truths are absolute, if it is not by the possibility of every moment comparing your thought of the object with the object itself; for instance, the definition of a straight line with a straight line; the act commanded by the conscience with the sentiment of moral obligation? And how can you make the comparison, unless by an intuition more or less direct? Now the possibility of an intuition of this kind is precisely that which we call evidentness. If then Catholicism is absolute truth, it can be recognised as such only intuitively and by way of evidence or manifestness; it must be evident—clear to see—unquestionable.

Granted. I have no wish to contradict you. I am ready to admit that Catholicism is evident.

Wait one moment, I replied, the thesis is good enough to be established before it is admitted. How do you say that man is saved?

By faith.

What faith?

The orthodox faith.

That is to say by believing what the Church teaches? at

least in being ready to believe it; that is to say in believing in the Church itself, in its infallibility, in its quality as the depositary of absolute truth. Faith in the Church is then obligatory?

Certainly.

Obligatory for all; for the priest and the layman; the learned and the ignorant; the missionary and the savage?

Why so many words? Of course for all.

Consider then if Catholicism can do without evidentness. I must believe in it, believe in it as absolute truth, believe in it under pain of damnation: the most ignorant man must believe in it as well as the most enlightened; how is it possible, unless the object thus proposed to our faith is evident, self-evident? The artisans and the peasants of our own country; the negroes and savages of our colonies, cannot go through a course of study to appreciate the proofs alleged by your scholars and preachers; they need something open and clear to all. Or perhaps you hold that men believe without reasons for believing?

By no means. Besides, I repeat it, I see no grounds for excepting to your conclusions.

Stop. I cannot let you go yet. I wish to put it beyond a question that Catholicism pretends to evidence and cannot do without it. You know that by nature it is not tolerant. The use of force to convert either misbelievers or disbelievers is an established practice in your Church. Augustin invoked that means; your popes and your very Christian kings have made much use of it; the most zealous and approved of your organs in the press will allow nothing to be said against it; and it is a fact that the official authority of Catholicism has never blamed it. Such a condemnation is a satisfaction which it has not granted to the spirit of the age. In this it is, I think, guided by a very sure instinct. It is aware that abso-

lute truth must be evident truth, and that the evidentness of religion makes persecution as natural, as necessary, as otherwise it would be absurd and hateful. Well then, if the truth of Catholicism shone with an evidence sufficient to convince all minds, it would be embraced by the whole world—the only exceptions being the insane and the depraved. Then, I do see not why it would not be proper, useful, and legitimate to compel the vicious to become virtuous on the penalty even of death.

You are carrying me too far.

How too far? the consequence is inevitable. But let us return to our facts. Do you grant what I ask? Can an absolute truth be anything else than a truth absolutely evident? The two terms, if not identical, are surely correlative—are they not?

I think I must say yes.

You grant it, I cried, changing my tone to mark a change on my part. You grant it! Catholicism is evident! But are you not playing with me? Rather say that it is paradoxical. In what is it evident? On what point? Is that tradition evident which lies scattered and inapprehensible in the Fathers and the Councils? Is that authority evident, the seat of which has never yet been determined? Is that infallibility evident which has no relations with the learning, the character, the sanctity of those who are its organs, so that even a scoundrel may become the mouth-piece of the Holy Spirit? Are those sacraments evident, which, being external and material rites, have to wash away sin, and regenerate souls? Is that transubstantiation evident, an anonymous miracle which exists only for faith, a supernatural fact which hides itself under the appearance of the natural? Yes, Catholicism must be evident, self-evident: that must it be or it is nothing. But at the same time it is not evident, it cannot be evident, it will never

be evident. Here it bears in its bosom a contradiction, and that contradiction is its gnawing worm.

I see no contradiction, he replied. I do not see how there can be one. In vain do you raise objections against religion; I declare that religion has to my eyes, the character of evidence,—what will you reply? If evidence does not prove itself, neither does it discuss; it cannot be refuted; I see, I declare that I see; You do not, I presume, pretend to prove to me that I do not see?

Give me your attention. You forget your part. You handle an instrument which will wound your hands. Did you not mention the words I and me? Did you not affirm that religion is evident to your eyes? You thus entrench yourself in your own inmost thought, in your personal conviction. But it is evidence you ought to adduce, and not your own sentiment—the evidence, which, observe, does not need to be adduced, for it is the same for all: self-evidence which no one thinks of either proving or disproving, precisely because it is self-evident, because it is seen by all the moment they cast their eyes thereon. Who disputes about the light of day?

None but the blind.

Pass the blind for a moment, I will return to them. I was intimating that the peculiar character of self-evidence is universality; and I add that Catholicism is not universal. As to the extent of its prevalence illusion was possible before the sixteenth century; but since the half of Europe has detached itself from the Roman Church, illusion is no longer possible. Catholicism is only a branch of Protestantism.

What do you say?

That Catholicism is no longer anything but an opinion,—a sect by the side of another sect. It anathematised individualism, subjectivism, but it could not keep itself free from them. You affirm your dogmas. You maintain the infalli-

bility of your church, the absolute truth of its doctrine, the evidence of its propositions—what is this? Merely your opinion—that and nothing more; of small importance is it that your opinion is shared by many others; that is merely a question of plus or minus, an affair of figures. The majority furnishes no test of truth.

Reflect, I continued. Evidence is a fact or it is not a fact. You claim it. A bad sign, a proof that it is not clear of itself. But what is evidence which is not clear of itself? People may differ from you, for they do so differ; but differ they could not if your absolute truth was manifest truth. You say that Catholicism is true; another will say as much of his religion, or of his irreligion; you declare it evident, but your opponent declares that his system is evident. Whatever you do, you find yourself in the presence of an opinion different from your own, an opinion which will set up the same claims; nor can the whole world solve the question to the satisfaction of both parties. To all your arguments I am able to reply that they do not satisfy me, that I think differently, and that I have as much right to my opinion as you have to yours. What would you have? Thus has God made the world. He has not willed that Church dogmas should be as a lustre which hangs from the ceiling in the middle of a room, and which every one beholds the moment he enters. Your attempts to bring forth truth from that relative condition in which God has placed it, your efforts to set up the absolute on the earth, disown even the conditions of the problem, I should say the conditions of humanity. You are like a man who should desire to get upon his own shoulders, or who should take his stand at the window to see himself pass along in the street. Excuse me, but all this seems to me somewhat puerile.

On my part, he answered, with some warmth; I must

say that you are swimming in full scepticism. If I am to believe you there is neither truth nor falsity.

Then you err. There is relative truth, that is, what each holds for truth, what is evident to each. For, observe, I do not pretend that you cease to regard Catholicism as true, and, if you will, as evident; it is in the nature of things that we should consider that evident which we consider true; we cannot, at the same time, account a proposition as true and as doubtful, as certain and uncertain. All I ask of you is, that you should re-act against your impression. It is necessary to control the personal and interior fact by means of the exterior and historical fact. You hold a statement to be evident, that is to say, it *appears* such to you; but others do not agree with you; the moment the disagreement is declared the statement is not evident, for evidence excludes diversity of opinions, and you ought to limit yourself to the assertion that the statement is evident to you, or, what would be better, that you look on it as true.

By no means! the human race does not say "that *seems* to me true," but "that *is* true." Why? Because it believes in the unity of human intelligence; it does not allow that what is true for one may not be true for another. I again affirm, you are falling into scepticism. And, indeed, it is the common fate of all who abandon the Catholic truth.

You forget, I replied, that the same man who identifies his opinion with absolute truth will perhaps to-morrow acknowledge that he was mistaken, and with the same confidence adopt another opinion which, when better informed, he will again renounce. You shut yourself up in the observation of the psychological phenomenon, that is, in the personal and subjective fact, while the question which occupies us is a question capable of an (so to call it) historical solution. Indeed, at the bottom it is a question of words. The point is

to determine what is meant by evidence. And what is it? Not that which one person or more take for certain; but that which is certain for all, that which exacts your "yes" whether you will or not, that which imposes itself as by its own authority.

With these explanations, I continued, I do not deny objective truth. There is in the world something besides individual opinions; there is a fusion of those opinions which takes place under the heat even of debate; there is a general truth which arises out of particular affirmations and negations; there is a certain objective power of truth which soars above the sentiments of individuals—which modifies them, tempers them, and harmonises them. It is thus that humanity successively resolves this and that question, never more to return to it; after which it passes to others and advances continually, leaving the sides of its pathway strewn with refuse. That refuse is the error which it has rejected; especially ideas the substance of which it has extracted; first impressions; childish and insufficient forms of thought. In this view it has been said, with some reason, that truth does not so much exist as is ever being born. It remains to ascertain if Catholicism is one of these definitive acquisitions which our race has made; if it has become one of the axioms of its moral and intellectual life; or if it is not rather the worn-out envelope of some substantial truth, a form of which human kind will more and more feel the insufficiency.

I hope, my friend replied, that moral truths are of the number of those to which you grant objective force and the evidence which results. Nothing more than this do I claim for Catholicism. Catholicism is evidence with a moral evidence; it is powerful with a religious power. Of course it requires corresponding dispositions of mind. The Gospel addresses itself to humble and penitent hearts. There is,

there can be no demonstration of the faith for him who fears its demands. The light shines for all the world, but there are men who love darkness rather than light.

This that you now say is certainly a lowering of pretensions. You began by maintaining the self-evidence of Catholicism. That assertion amounts to nothing less than to declare every dissident struck with folly, or guilty of a hardened heart. You abandon intellectual evidence; at any rate it is clear that all unbelievers in Catholicism are not ready for bedlam. Now you entrench yourself in moral evidence. Is the position much better? May not all churches and all opinions employ the same resource? Do they not actually employ it? Would it not be well for all to give up an argument which does equal service to all? This is not all. I deny the truth of your assertion, and I appeal from your defence to your conscience; from your theory to your moral sentiment. You speak of internal dispositions requisite to a faith; do those dispositions of necessity lead to Catholicism? Is repentance, is humility, is devotedness, is charity, founded exclusively in your church? Has not heresy its saints? Have you never felt the spirit of Christ in other communions besides your own? Is it not the misfortune, I had almost said the curse, of your system to be unable to recognise piety in a dissident, to be obliged to deny it under pain of denying yourself? Take my advice, never raise the question on which you have just trusted; none is more dangerous for Catholicism; it is the point where its theory breaks to pieces on the rock of facts; there it becomes alike inconsistent and odious.

Your arguments are specious, replied my companion; perhaps I should find some difficulty to reply to them; and yet I must say your logic does not shake me much. It is so easy to criticise! In vain do you prove Catholicism false; at

notwithstanding, it has for sixteen centuries been the life of the world—and at present what does it want in order to save society—unless to be believed by society?

The misfortune is, that society can no longer believe Catholicism. You distrust logic, you say—as if, in all the discussion, I had done any thing else than show the disagreement of the Catholic theory with reality and experience. There was a time when that theory corresponded with the facts with which it had to do. Catholicism was truly Catholicism, for it embraced, if not the world, yet Europe; its doctrines might pass for evident, since they were generally admitted; the truths which it taught might be taken for absolute, for no others were known. But the facts which supported it have now abandoned it; there is contradiction between it and reality; between its dogmas and the wants, tendencies and ideas of our age. It has fallen into “the sere and yellow leaf;” for living purposes it is powerless.

Would that this were its sole fault! Catholicism was one of the great things of the world; it watched over the cradle of modern civilization; it taught it the name of God and the name of Christ; it inculcated on it faith in mind and in immortality; in ages of rudeness and license, it alone represented justice and charity; we owe to it the germs of all we are. Alas! it is not we who quit it, it is Catholicism that abandons us. It has not learnt how to remain young; together with its strength it has lost its sincerity; together with its sincerity it has lost its sap and its life. For those who known how to rise above sectarian passions, and to regard objects in the light of eternal truth, there is no more painful sight than modern Catholicism with its impotency, its passions, its puerile paradoxes, the bad faith of its polemics, the bitterness of its party spirit, its lack of political morality; with its fanatical and ignorant clergy; with its journals devoted to

universal reviling; with its pope occupied in decreeing the immaculate conception! It bears in its countenance all the signs of decay; in our age of great ruins it is in reality the strongest and the most complete.

2—PROTESTANTISM IS ONLY A BRANCH OF CATHOLICISM.

I went to see a Protestant clergyman—one of my friends. I recounted to him the conversation that I had had with the Catholic. He was delighted with me:—Excellent, he cried; perfect, unanswerable! And what did he reply? Nothing of importance, I am sure.

I must confess I was a little embarrassed with this approbation. I did not, I answered, expect to find you so completely of my way of thinking.

Why not? Do you suspect me of some sympathy for their superstitions?

No, I replied, in a hesitating tone; but I feared my objections might appear to you somewhat bold. Let us speak frankly; it seems to me that the considerations which I used to refute my adversary go somewhat further than Catholicism, and, who knows? strike other orthodoxies through the side of Rome.

I know where you are, said the pastor. I have already heard you maintain that position. In your view, Luther and Calvin only displaced the seat of authority to place another in its stead; instead of a man for a pope they gave us a book for a pope; and after having proved to the catholics that their religion is an inconsistent Protestantism, you undertake to prove to the Protestants that their religion is a bastard

Catholicism. That may be clever, but you are not serious in it. One of your proposition destroys the other; one must choose between the two.

Assist me to get out of the difficulty. If I have understood you, you are disposed to admit the first of my two assertions, and you would see nothing too paradoxical in considering Catholicism as a branch of Protestantism.

That depends on what you mean by Protestantism.

I take the word in its most general sense, and, if you will, in its ideal sense. Let us leave aside the doctrinal differences which separate the Protestant churches one from another—what remains? A Protestant is a man who makes religion an affair between his soul and his God, and in consequence, an affair of personal conviction; that is to say, that he knows what he believes and why he believes; it is also to declare that his faith bears the imprint of his own individuality, and that he admits the right of diversity among believers, the right of churches in the church.

You are describing free inquiry! and you find some analogy between that principle and Catholicism! On the contrary, I had always thought that the Catholic was a man who had renounced all enquiry, who renounced his own judgment, and who acknowledged but one church—the Catholic.

Let him admit no church, no Christianity, no salvation out of his own pale—it is of small consequence; he is exclusive—are Protestants never so? Do they not devote one another to eternal damnation? As to free inquiry, I defy the Catholics to do without it.

Truly you are simple enough. Except a few Protestants who throw themselves into the arms of mother Church, and that less by conviction than fatigue and impotence, the Catholics remain in their Church because they are there, remain by their *vis inertiae*, without taking the trouble to inquire whether

they are in the truth, without caring for religious truth,—in a word—without believing such a thing.

And the Protestants, I cried. Are they never Protestants by birth, by baptism, by habit, by assumption, by indifference? Are those in our Church numerous who have weighed the *pro* and *con*; who have called to their council their intelligence and their conscience; who have given themselves an account of their faith; who have truly formed their opinions, and chosen their Church? You make my task too easy. One might say, that you had undertaken to prove the position against which you spoke before, and to show how much Catholicism there is in Protestantism.

Right, replied he, smiling. I have furnished you with arms against myself. However, we will return to this point; at present it is with the opposite paradox we have to deal?

What then, I asked, is the principle of Protestantism? Duty, and consequently, the right of each to form a personal belief. In order that my faith may have a religious character, I myself must believe it; I myself must search, learn, choose, and inwardly digest. This is what is called free enquiry? Now, it is in vain that Catholicism tries to escape from free enquiry. One of two things it must take; either it wishes men to believe blindly, mechanically, as the savage believes in his *fetiché*; or it wishes men to believe in full knowledge of the facts, and for that purpose it exhibits reasons for believing. But if it exhibits reasons for believing, it must be that each may appreciate them, and here you have the faith which depends on individual conviction. Must I not at least know if the Roman Church is truly the Church of Jesus Christ, the veritable Church, sole and infallible; and how can I know it if I have not examined the question? Afterwards, I shall be able to give myself up, with my eyes closed, to the authority which I have acknowledged to be infallible; but first that

infallibility must be demonstrated to me, and that implies examination and discussion. How small soever a part Catholicism leaves to free discussion, it is compelled to leave some part. Here the principle is conceded. Besides it is an encroaching guest; give it an inch, it will take an ell.

I have only one objection to make to you, replied the minister. You have taken the word Protestantism in too general and too negative a sense. A Protestant is not only a person who claims the right to examine and judge for himself, but one who, in the exercise of that right, has come to a positive faith.

Yes, I replied. But what is that faith, that positive principle of Protestantism, in your judgment?

The authority of Scripture. How divided soever the Protestant Churches, they have a common bond; that common bond is the Bible considered as the supreme rule in matters of faith.

I will not contradict you. Only observe that we thus come to the point to which I desired to lead you. Catholicism, we saw, could not escape from inquiry which is the Protestant principle; now it seems that on its side, Protestantism retains authority in religion, that is, the essential principle of Catholicism. In reality, Catholics and Protestants do not differ as to the necessity of authority, but solely as to its place or seat;—what or who is the depositary of authority in religion? They say, the Church; you say, the Scripture.

The difference, it seems to me, is very great. It is the difference between the true and the false. The authority of the one is a pure fiction; that of the other is the very word of God.

You mistake; that is not the point. The question is not to inquire which is the true and which the false authority. The very idea of authority is false, for it is contradictory.

You might as well deny motion in presence of a man who is walking up and down. Authority is a fact.

I did not speak of the fact, but the idea. Let us analyse that idea. I find there the pretension to the absolute. In a word, he who avouches authority avouches infallibility; and he who avouches infallibility avouches the absolute.

What! are we going to fall back into the the controversy you had the other day?

That is inevitable, since we are speaking of the relations of Protestantism with Catholicism.

Well! tell me what contradiction you find in the notion of the absolute.

The absolute itself, the absolute considered as the possession of a man is a contradiction, for man is a relative and limited being.

Man's fallibility does not prevent the scripture from being infallible in itself.

No, but it does prevent its being infallible for you, and it does prevent its being recognised as infallible by you. I should say of the Bible what I have said of the pope; let us admit that it is the depositary of absolute truth, not a step the more forward are we on that account. In passing from the original text into a translation, and from a translation into an explanation which you give me, or which I give myself, absolute truth inevitably becomes relative; in order that the infallible truth should, as such, enter and be in my mind, I must be infallible myself, and infallibly must I understand and interpret the scripture. This has been felt in all ages of the Church. It is to provide for this requirement, that the early christians ascribed a supernatural origin to the Septuagint Version, that the Council of Trent sanctioned the use of the Vulgate, and that the Swiss theologians of the seventeenth century extended inspiration to the vowel points of the

Hebrew text. Vain efforts ! Were the text certain, were the translation dictated by God, the interpretation of the text or the version would remain to be done by man ; and though we possessed an inspired commentary, the ordinary christian would himself need inspiration to understand the explanation infallibly.

Well, well ! you take pleasure in pushing things to an extreme. Certainly it is not indifferent whether we draw at a pure or an impure fountain, even if our vases are rude and cracked. I should say that our means of arriving at Biblical truth are not infallible, but sufficient ; as I should admit that inspiration itself is, if not absolute, at least sufficient.

Take care. The concession goes a long way. The absolute must be absolute or nothing ; absolute or relative there is no other choice. In declaring yourself satisfied with a sufficient certainty, you renounce the absolute ; that is, you give up infallibility ; and so, you relinquish authority ; for in matters of faith there can be no authority on the outside of the absolute. A fine authority that which you must interpret, discuss, qualify, limit ! What is sufficient authority but authority of your own making. Sufficient to you may not be sufficient to me. I warn you, you are betraying the cause of orthodoxy.

There was a short interval of silence.

Let us go on, I resumed, to another element of the idea we are analysing. If authority is absolute truth, its titles must be self-evident. Are they not so ? Then the authority depends on something independent of itself. In other words, the authority is no authority at all. Accordingly Protestantism has produced evidence on behalf of the supernatural character with which it invests the Scripture. Such is the object of the properties attributed to the sacred code, of what the theologians call *perspicuitas et semetipsum interpretandi*.

facultas, the clearness of Scripture and its faculty of self-interpretation. Such is the object especially of that "testimony of the Holy Spirit" to which Protestants appeal as the sovereign proof of the divinity of the Bible. The leaders of the Reformation fully understood the difficulty. They needed a point of support for their lever; a solid first principle; and that basis must be a truth within the reach of all. Suppose that the proof of inspiration did not repose on itself, that is, on its own proper evidence, on what could it repose? on the researches of science or the testimony of the Church and of tradition? In the latter case, it is not the Scripture which would form the dogmatic authority, but the testimony of which the authority of the Scripture would be only the consequence. In the former case, if the aid of science were necessary to establish the divinity of the Scriptures, faith would become the exclusive privilege of such as leisure and culture made fit for the arduous labours of criticism, and Christianity would cease to be the religion of the simple-minded, the religion of all—in a word, it would cease to be Christianity.

Whither are you tending? interrupted the clergyman. I subscribe to all you have just said; I accept the necessity of self-evidence to constitute the authority of Scripture; I acknowledge that such is the doctrine of Protestantism; but I do not see where that doctrine is in fault. Permit me here to appeal to your own consciousness, to your experience as a Christian;—have you never felt what the reformers call "the testimony of the Spirit?" Has the majesty of the Scriptures never spoken to your heart? Have you never, while reading the Bible, been moved in the depths of your being? Have you not understood the force of that word of the Lord, at which, for my part I confess, I always stop with a kind of surprise. "You are already pure through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John xv. 3) Yes, there is in the

word of God a purifying virtue, a virtue which has no need of proof, but which makes itself felt by the soul directly and immediately ; which impresses it with the assurance that only God could have so spoken, and that the Scripture is the truth because it is the light and the life.

Far am I from wishing to contest the legitimacy of the sentiments which you describe so well, or the justice of the instinctive reasoning which infers the divine origin of a doctrine from its holy influence. God is the only source of all that is good as well as all that is true, and the more we feel ourselves raised toward him, united with him by words which we hear or read, the more are we inclined to disregard the human mediums in order to seek in God the sole cause of the emotions we experience. But that is not the question. I undertook to prove that the notion of authority is contradictory. Here is the contradiction. On the one side, authority cannot do without self-evidentness ; on the other, self-evidentness implies appreciation on the part of man ; and such appreciation destroys authority. To appreciate, is to receive on solid grounds, to judge before submitting, to assert the right of rejecting as well as that of accepting. Now on such conditions authority is impossible. Consider rather what are the consequences of the testimony of the Holy Spirit. The sentiments which you have described, in terms so eloquent, you do not experience equally on reading every page of the Bible. There are many parts of that collection which do not at all call them forth, and which have never called them forth in the mind of any one. This is not all ; the same sentiments sometimes accompany the reading of other religious writings, the preaching of the Gospel on the part of truly religious men who do not, however pretend to apostolic gifts. If, then, you take your personal sentiment as criterion of inspiration, it will appear that the Scripture is not the sole inspired object,

and that the Scripture is not inspired as a whole—and then I ask you, what becomes of its authority? I do not blame the reformers for having given the testimony of the Holy Spirit as the last foundation of faith. They required self-evidentness as a point of departure, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit is but another name for self-evidentness in matters of faith. Besides, the Reformers, in the choice of this principle, manifested great depth of religious insight—they saw that you cannot get any assured certainty for the soul but that which spontaneously springs from a direct view and personal experience of the truth. But they did not foresee the whole bearing of their principle. That principle is negative as well as positive. It has a critical value. In its reaction, it attacks all the heterogenous elements of the reformed faith. Allow the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to put forth its immediate consequences, and you will have a revolution in your theology. What in effect does that doctrine signify, if not that the religious sentiment of each is the sovereign criterion of religious truth. And what ensues? That man ought to repel every article of belief which his religious sentiment does not accept. Hence an immense shipwreck of dogmas of all kinds, and specially the shipwreck of authority. Instead of one Bible, whose inspiration, determined *a priori*, escapes from all judgment, we have a collection of books, whose intrinsic value we are called to appreciate; instead of living under the the absolute empire of one irresponsible authority, we find ourselves in presence of moral power, by which we are dominated and persuaded at the same time; instead of one mode of Christian evidence, supported on proofs altogether external, we have the everlasting testimony which is rendered to the everlasting Gospel; instead of a dogmatic ontology, composed of formulas relative to the trinity, the eternal generation of the *logos*, and the procession of the

spirit, in union with the two natures and two wills in Christ, we have a religion altogether religious, that is a religion for the conscience and the life; instead of ascetic and ritual observances, ablutions, fasts and sabbaths, we have a morality which reposes directly and entirely on our moral sense. You see the doctrine of the internal testimony is a heresy, the responsibility of which you had better make haste to disown; or, rather it is a pregnant principle, all the consequences of which you ought to accept. Any way, it is the authentic expression of Protestant subjectivism; and, on that account, I reject as so many contradictions, the elements of the system which cannot be referred to the testimony of the Spirit, and, in particular, even the search after some outward authority.

In that how well do I, said the minister, recognise your mind, prone to extremes in all things. A dilemma, the absolute opposition of terms—such is the constant method of your arguing. With this abstract sort of logic one may gain the victory in a discussion, but one also throws oneself beyond the limits of reality. For a moment lay logic aside and consider facts. I do not see that authority and liberty are incompatible. Far from that, the harmonious development of social conditions depends on the equilibrium of the two principles, as its catastrophes proceed from the predominance given to the one or to the other. In consequence I cannot hinder myself from recognizing a sign of wisdom, an element of strength, and a pledge of duration in that pretended inconsistency by which Protestantism at once turns to account the rights of free enquiry and those of tradition, the rights of the individual and those of the Church, tempering one principle by the other, and maintaining between them an equipoise equally reasonable and advantageous.

I confess, I answered, that I have greater confidence than you in logic, that is, in truth, in the ideal. Be assured that in the long run it is logic which governs the world. Logic is the latent spring of all human things. It ceaselessly labours to disengage the true from the false, overturning old in raising up new ones, and leading humanity on to the realization of the divine idea. A patient but incorruptible Nemesis, sooner or later it punishes all infractions of the eternal laws of truth and justice; it redresses all wrongs; it vindicates all rights. The fact does not prevent one from admiring with you a government in which authority and liberty temper each other. Carefully must we distinguish right and fact in this matter. I will explain myself. But first let us define the terms. Long have I desired to ask what you understood by authority.

By authority I understand the right of a person to be believed or obeyed, simply on the ground that he speaks.

Simply on the ground that he speaks or on his word, I added; and in consequence independently of the justice which I may find in the order he gives, or the intrinsic truth which I discover in the doctrine he enunciates?

Doubtless, he answered.

I resumed:—You do not, I presume, wish that the doctrine taught by authority cannot be recognised as good, holy, true; but merely that the perception of its excellence is not the condition of the welcome to which it is entitled.

Exactly.

Only, I say again, the more we believe in a doctrine because we find it true, the less we believe it by authority; as also the less we receive it on its own proper account and in virtue of its own proper truth, the more we yield to authority.

Granted.

Let us give the name of experience to that direct appreciation of the truth of things, that judgment as to the intrinsic value of a statement or a doctrine, and we shall arrive at a law which may be formulated thus:—the domain of authority lessens in the degree in which the domain of experience increases.

I have nothing to object.

Be good enough to follow me a little further. If an authority is to be obeyed on its word, it ought surely to establish itself as an authority?

Of course.

And how shall we know it for such?

It will exhibit its testimonials. In the last issue, the sole and supreme source of authority is God; all authority must go back to God; an authority is legitimate only in the degree in which it is able to adduce a divine testimony.

But how are we to know that the testimony is divine? How shall we judge that the testimonials are authentic?

By supernatural signs, such as prophecy and miracles.

In pronouncing these words the good pastor seemed to me slightly embarrassed. Probably his confidence in the grounds he mentioned was not complete. So difficult is it to preserve yourself from the religious renewal which at the present moment every one inhales with the air he breathes.

I hastened to put him at his ease.

I should, I replied, have more than one objection to raise against the intervention of supernatural proofs; would it be very easy to point in the Bible to one prediction, a single one, which is at once sufficiently authentic, sufficiently precise and manifestly accomplished? Are you acquainted with any criterion by which you can distinguish the natural from the supernatural? Are the Biblical writings of such a nature as to put the reality of the miracles they contain beyond all ques-

tion? Finally, what are we to think of the principle of Locke, according to which we ought to judge the miracle by the doctrine and not the doctrine by the miracle? But all this would take us far from our subject. I admit then the certainty of the Biblical narratives, the reality of the miracles found therein, the force of evidence attached thereto by theology, the rigour of the logic by which you deduce the infallibility of the Scripture from that of the apostles, and that of the apostles from their miraculous gifts; I grant all that; protestant authority is constituted. Are we out of the business? By no means! The scaffolding raised with so much labour falls at the first breath.

Indeed? I do not very well see whither you are going.

I beg you to continue your reply. Since you hold so firmly to the cause of authority tell me whence comes the importance you attach to it. What interest for instance, have you for establishing the divinity of the Bible? What do you think religion gains thereby?

Can you put such a question? he cried. The advantage is manifest. The Catholic who believes in the authority of the Church, accepts all that the Church teaches. The Protestant who believes in the authority of the Bible, admits all he finds written in the Bible. He deprives himself, so to say, of the right of raising any objection to the facts, the ideas, the precepts, which may shock his pride or scandalise his reason.

I understand. The object of authority is to cause one to receive the Christian teaching in a mass, to substitute one act of faith for several, to reduce belief to one *à priori*, and implicit assent, and by that means to exclude all *à posteriori* judgment and even examination into details. In brief, it is an inheritance which the heir is to accept without an inventory.

I could not have spoken better.

So much the worse for you, for if such is the intention and bearing of your system, a new and radical contradiction must be acknowledged in the idea of authority. Authority, it seems, has for its object to exclude *à posteriori* judgments. This pretension is vain, because authority does not contain in itself any self-justification, because it does not find in the nature of things any legitimate prescription to oppose to the rights of reason, because the limits it wishes to impose on enquiry are arbitrary. It is this which made me say just now that in itself authority is null. It is a phantom which governs the world, and which vanishes at the touch of an infant's fingers.

You expect, I dare say, that I shall take your assertions for proofs.

Be calm, I am coming to the proofs. Do you know whence comes the impotence of authority? From its inability to make a religion with authority for its sole dogma. The Christian cannot always remain at the preface of Christianity, I mean at the demonstration of the infallibility of the Church or the inspiration of the Bible; you must communicate to him what the Church teaches: you must let him read his Bible. Now, in reading and in listening he judges, and the moment he judges, to him authority exists no longer.

No longer am I able to follow you.

I will put a question—When once authority is established, would it be legitimate to examine the doctrines which it presents to us as divine?

Certainly not; since those doctrines are divine, all that remains is to receive them with submission.

Then, when the apologists of religion cause us to admire the divine perfections manifested in redemption; when Pascal displays the relations of the doctrines of Christianity with the wants of the human heart, they perform a dangerous work.

O no! for they seek to confirm those doctrines and not to shake them, and consequently to establish authority and not to overthrow it.

Praise then is permitted, but not blame? We may admire, but must not criticise? Yet how can we praise unless we know the facts, and how can we know the facts unless we examine? and if in an examination undertaken with the best intentions we meet with insurmountable difficulties, unanswerable objections, grounds for denying that which we had at first thought we ought to believe—what then?

Submit. Authority once established, submission is inevitable. In such a case, as Bossuet would say, you must renounce your own judgment to acquiesce in the judgment of the Church, or as I should say, of the Bible.

Submit? Why? Are the new results to which I have arrived, are they necessarily less sure than the former?

My friend grew impatient. Once more, he said, once more I ask you, have you not supposed the authority demonstrated? Then, the discussion is at an end. God has spoken, you have only to bow down.

But there is conflict between the arguments which support authority and the objects by which it is called in question.

Conflict, my dear sir. When there is conflict between God and man, I have always thought, is bound to submit.

Agreed, I replied. But that is not the question here. The supposed conflict is not between God and man; it arises between one series of human reasonings and another, between certain general considerations which have established or appeared to establish authority, on the one side, and on the other, particular facts which lead to a different conclusion. You think you reply to all that by declaring that God has spoken, presuming that the infallibility of the Bible is proved. In speaking thus, you set aside the essential conditions of

human knowledge. There is no proposition so certain but has some preliminary, A system is true only so far as it is in agreement with reality, with all reality; and if facts are discovered by which it is contradicted, you must necessarily modify the system, perhaps you will have to abandon it. Thus it is with the authority of the Church in Catholicism, and the authority of the Bible in Protestantism. I am told that the Church is infallible; specious arguments are put before me, but if infallible, it cannot have been mistaken; but mistaken it is, for the doctrine of the trinity implies a contradiction; or when I find the Catholic Church pledged to the doctrine of the immaculate conception, and know that the doctrine is nothing but a mythological fancy; I learn that infallible though it pretends to be, it is in reality fallible, for it has actually fallen into error. After the same manner—the Protestants say that the Bible is inspired, and, as inspired, so infallible; they want not considerations of various kinds, which make the opinion plausible; but if I read the sacred books, I find in them historical errors, contradictions, impossibilities; in consequence, I conclude, and I cannot but conclude that they are fallible, and are led to pronounce the reasoning fallacious, which might at first have inclined me to think the whole Bible inspired.

My companion shook his head, but made no answer. I profited by his silence to continue my remarks.

We have seen it, I said; the true name of the faith of authority is faith by wholesale. The aim is to reduce enquiry to the smallest morsel. You are forbidden to search the vessel, under the pretext that the flag covers the merchandise. Authority is a general argument, intended to hold the place of the study of particular facts. But why? On what right do you exclude facts? I defy you to give an answer, and still cleave to your authority. General arguments, which rest

not on an analysis of particular facts, which are any thing else than the synthesis of those facts, have only an hypothetic value; they are mere conjectures, which you must verify by an examination of details. Here is the vulnerable point of systems of authority;—here is the dropped link in the chain-armour of the cuirass. The partisans of authority desire to preclude enquiry and the free thought which ensues; at least, they desire to limit and circumscribe both; but never have they found valid reasons why reason should abdicate its functions.

You do not take into account, the pastor at length replied, the spiritual darkness with which sin has obscured our human intelligence. I am not surprised; pelagianism always follows at the heels of rationalism. Besides, the errors of the Bible may be only apparent. How often has science dissipated the difficulties, reconciled the contradictions, overturned the objections which infidelity had heaped together!

Are you speaking seriously? Are you reduced to have recourse to scepticism, in order to defend the faith. Do you not see that if man is not competent to ascertain an error in the text, he cannot be competent for any thing else? You refuse him the less to grant him the greater. He is invited to sit in judgment on questions the most delicate and the most difficult—such as the reality of the supernatural, the mission of Christ, the credibility of the apostolic testimony, the inspiration of the Bible, and yet you will not let him pronounce an opinion on historical or literary questions, the authenticity of a writing, or the likelihood of a narrative. Or do you refuse to man all competence in matters of faith? But then, how can he distinguish between the true and the false? How can he judge that the gospel is divine? How can he choose? How can he believe? Your doctrine leaves you no means of arriving at religious truth, except super-

natural illumination, and, in the last analysis, the arbitrariness of predestination. Moreover, my dear sir, allow me to tell you that all this discussion is perfectly idle. Decline, as long as you please, the competency of man—prohibit enquiry, proscribe reason, You lose your labour. Even those whom you have persuaded will the next moment become faithless to the principle which had seduced them by the appearance of submission and self-renunciation. Man often believes what he wishes to believe, but often also the evidence is too strong for him, and drags him along against his will. If you would put an end to criticism, you must put an end to thinking—nay, you must close man's eyes and stop his ears. The moment I read the Bible I have, whether I will or not, an impression; that impression is an appreciation, a judgment, and that judgment may prove contrary to the infallibility of the book.

What! man cannot abstain from giving a judgment! he cannot, in presence of a difficulty offered by science, repel the doubt by appealing to a recognised authority! Why, that is seen every day.

And every day also you see good faith surrendering to evidence, and rejecting the authority before which it had been inclined to bend. Moreover, I want no other judge than yourself. You shall see whether it is easy to renounce reason. Only two or three questions will be needful; do you consent to give me replies?

Certainly.

I remember to have heard a minister of the Anglican Church preach on the history of Jonah. The abiding of the prophet in the whale's belly gave him no trouble. I go so far, said he, as to declare that if the Scripture made Jonah swallow the whale instead of the whale swallow Jonah, we

should be equally bound to believe its statement. What is your opinion, my dear sir? Would you go so far as that?

The supposition of the preacher is absurd. No one has a right to put fooleries into the Bible, by way of hypothesis. I believe in the contents of the Bible because the Bible is inspired; but, at the same time, I believe that by reason of that inspiration, the contents of the Bible are worthy of belief.

Very well said. The supposed fact cannot be found in the Bible, because it is absurd, and because the Bible, being inspired, cannot contain absurdities. To say that Jonah swallowed the whale is, you intimate, an absurdity. I conclude, that if the Bible recounted such a thing, it would no longer be your Bible; it would, in your eyes, cease to be inspired. But I pass on to another fact. If you have ever been at Florence, you may have noticed in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, above the altar of Saint Joseph, an inscription intended to recommend the intercession of that blessed personage. Then you read, *Ite ad Joseph*—go unto Joseph (Genesis xli. 55). They are, you will remember, the words with which Pharaoh, during the famine, sent the Egyptians to his provident vizier. What do you think of this manner of citing scripture?

It is scandalous.

And what would you do if you found such citations in the Bible—if, for example, you found the Old Testament quoted in the New, with as much license?

I simply reply that that is impossible because the Bible is inspired.

In other words, the Bible would not be inspired if it contained such extravagances. That is settled. And what would you say of a passage of Dante which I just now remember? It is in his Paradise. According to Beatrice, when

God's justice appears to us injustice that is a reason why we should believe it to be justice. This you will admit, is a little paradoxical.

Another idle supposition. God cannot be unjust because he is God; and revelation cannot so represent him because it is revelation.

I do not, I replied, wish to examine whether or not the Bible contains parts which tend to represent God as unjust, citations which call to mind that of Santa Maria Maggiore, or marvels as extraordinary as the existence of a whale in a man's stomach. This is all I want you to admit.—You do not pretend that the Bible changes error into truth, and impossibility into reality; you are satisfied with saying, that the Bible cannot contain any error or impossibility because it is divine; but in speaking thus, you declare yourself fit to judge what is true and what is impossible. That is not all; in declaring that the Bible cannot contain an arbitrary citation or a puerile argument, you admit the converse proposition, namely that the Bible would cease to be inspired for you, if you found in it faults of that kind. Henceforward competent to judge of error and truth, if in reading the Scripture you find there a manifest error, a contradiction, an inexact statement, an unsatisfactory argument, an unworthy sentiment, a false notion of the Deity, you could not help concluding that your earlier faith was erroneous, and that the sacred volume was not infalible. Exactly in this way does belief in inspiration every day sink and disappear in a multitude of minds.

I am not sure; said the minister after some moments of reflexion, I am not sure that you have not exaggerated the pretensions of Protestantism in order the more easily to combat them. Let us admit that the authority of Scripture ought to be proved not solely by general and external considerations, but also by the study of its contents; let us admit

that the inspiration of a collection of books can be established only by a double operation, the dogmatic or *à priori* proof, and the solution of difficulties of detail—what would you find there of a serious nature for Protestantism? in what way would the solidity of the system be shaken?

Call to mind your own definition of authority. It is, you said, the right which a person has to be obeyed on his word: it is the *Magister dixit*, "so said the master;" it is *Scriptum est*, "so it is written,"—this is the argument—the word decides. Now if I believe in the words of the Bible, not because they are in the Bible, but because I have examined them and found them good and true, I shall still have a Bible, I shall have even an inspired Bible; but that Bible will no longer be an authority for me. Besides, the proceeding once admitted, others may arrive at different results, this man rejecting a part of Scripture, that man rejecting it altogether. The door is henceforth open to liberty without any other guarantee, open to subjectivism without any other counterpoise than the objectivity and power of truth itself.

By your account, authority is only a dream, and the difficulty would be to learn how the word came into existence. It seems to me however, that authority has played and still plays a great part in the affairs of the world.

I have, I answered, made a distinction between fact and right. By right, authority is null and void, for it presents a contradictory idea, or if you prefer the statement, an idea which cannot be realised. It aims in reality to suppress individual judgment, and nevertheless it has never been able to justify the renunciation of individual judgment which it exacts, nor to establish grounds for its own existence. But if authority is null and void as a matter of right, it is, I grant you, real as a matter of fact. Authority is the common patrimony heaped up by tradition, habit, and testimony,

and transmitted from generation to generation. Authority is that circle of generally received notions in the midst of which an individual is born, under the influence of which he is developed, and with which he can no more dispense than the embryo can dispense with the maternal womb. All men begin with authority; and all, even the most independent, owe to it even to the end the greatest part of their spiritual life. Authority is however null in right, for as soon as I approach it, it vanishes; as soon as I ask for its titles, it cannot even attempt to shew them without ceasing to be authority. It is absurd to believe without reason for believing, or, what comes to the same thing; without any other reason than example and habit: it is absurd to live and to die in such and such a religion, solely because it is that of my family and my country. Nevertheless such is the condition of the bulk of our race. Well:—here we meet with the true authority, that which imposes itself on us without having even to show itself—the authority of fact. But let doubt arise, let objections be put forward—that moment authority is no more. It loses all the ground that inquiry takes possession of, or experience, or personal independence, or individuality. The more a man is a child the more he belongs to authority; he becomes a man only by putting away authority; his enfranchisement in regard to authority is the condition and the measure of his mental and moral development.

The strength of Catholicism, I continued, is in its being a fact, as is authority itself; it is religion in an unconscious state, in a state of usage and national tradition. Its weakness lies in its not being able to discuss; the dream vanishes the instant you set your eyes thereon. The strength of Protestantism is that it is a right of every man. Protestantism is religion made personal or individual by free enquiry; now such a religion is the sole religion which truly deserves the

name. But the weakness of Protestantism is its mixture of two contradictory principles—authority and free enquiry. It is nevertheless true to say that Protestantism owes its history to its very inconsistency. Owing to that inconsistency it has been a compromise and a transition, a transition from pure authority, against which the human mind began to rise in revolt; to pure liberty, for which Europe was insufficiently prepared. Had it been more consistent it would have been more feeble. However, Protestantism and Catholicism have common elements. The latter dares not and cannot entirely repudiate enquiry; the former endeavours to retain authority. There is however this difference between them, that the centre of gravity of Catholicism is in authority, while that of Protestantism is in liberty. The historical significance of the Reformation is in the revolt of individual judgment against tradition. Now, a system always unfolds itself according to the sense of its principle; it tends to reject the foreign elements it contains, and to become more logical and more homogeneous. The human mind does not easily resign itself to contradictions:—as soon as it becomes aware of having fallen into them it makes an effort for its extrication. Accordingly the days of Protestantism are numbered; I mean the days of Protestantism as a positive system, as an institution; for as a principle it is immortal. God grant that when the day of liberty shall have come, it may find souls strong enough to bear it, and that before the corpse of the Church which has been our mother and our nurse, we may be able to exclaim not “All is coming to an end!” but “All is beginning!”

3.—THE CHRIST OF THE POPULAR CHURCHES UTTERS NO WORD OF SOLUTION.

I had come to a stand, in order to converse with a friend. The minister of whom I have spoken, was traversing the promenade. He recognised me, came to me, and apologised for interrupting us.

I have found it; said he, in laying his hand on my arm; I have found it!

What have you found, my dear Archimedes?

Precisely that, he answered, which the philosopher of Syracuse asked for. He undertook to lift the earth, provided some one gave him a point of support for his lever. I say as much of the moral world; authority is the only lever which can raise the moral world, and the question is reduced to the discovery of a point of support for authority.

That in truth is the difficulty.

And what will you say if I show you that the point of support is found?

I shall yield to the resources of your dynamics.

You embarrassed me the other day with your sophistries; let us now enter into historical reality and look at facts as they really are.

With all my heart, I replied.

Two words will suffice to make you understand my thought. The Divinity of Jesus Christ is the essence of Christianity, since this belief once taken away nothing separates us from Deism. Is it not so?

Deism? You alarm me. I grant you all. Go on.

Omniscience is a necessary attribute of divinity; so that

Jesus Christ must have known all things. But if he knew all things, he could not be mistaken; that is, he was infallible. What is your opinion?

You draw nothing from your premises which is not contained in them.

Well; tell me, yes or no, did not Jesus Christ cite the Old Testament as a sacred collection, as a divine book, as a decisive authority—in brief, as an inspired and infallible word?

I must say I find a certain difference between the manner in which the Saviour cites the Scriptures and the manner in which they are cited by his contemporaries, in particular the apostles. But I might have some trouble in making you understand what I mean. I suppose then that you are in the right—what do you aim at?

If Jesus Christ held the Old Testament to be infallible, infallible the Old Testament is, and we ought humbly to accept it as such. All the appearances of error and contradiction can be nothing but appearances. At every objection raised by reason you will find yourself required to choose between the objection and the divinity of Jesus Christ, between human reason and Christianity. If you hesitate you will fall into Deism, and we have no longer any terms to keep with you; you are a disarmed and open enemy; as soon as you open your mouth we shall cry out “Deism!” “Deism!” as soon as you take your pen in hand, we shall feel pity and regret, and all will be over.

This certainly is a new “short way” to the end of controversy. But how about the New Testament? Jesus Christ could not have set his seal to a collection of books which, in his day, did not exist.

I beg your pardon; in proclaiming the divinity of the one he proclaimed the divinity of the other.

What do you mean?

He gave the idea that a second collection would be formed, and that that collection would be inspired equally with the first.

Is it so indeed? I do not remember any passage in which Jesus makes allusion to a future collection.

That is not what I intended. He could not professedly speak of a book which was not an existence.

Why not? He certainly announced to the apostles the persecutions, of which they would be the victims; to Judas he foretold his treachery; to Peter, his martyrdom; to all, the ruin of Jerusalem and the temple. Why could he not have spoken of the New Testament?

That would be useless. It is quite clear that the Christians could not fail to have a sacred collection, since the Jews had one. The want of it would have been in inferiority.

Saint Paul saw in such a want, a pre-eminence. Any way, you must allow me to think that a declaration of Christ would not have been useless to the New Testament. Reflect a little. If we had from his lips a list of books, which were to constitute our canon, and a solemn attestation of their divine authority—how many difficulties would have no existence!

We really possess all that.

You possess it? Have you discovered a fifth gospel?

No; but every time that Jesus Christ speaks of the Old Testament, he speaks equally of the New.

How so?

By analogy! or rather, *à potiori*. In fact, Jesus Christ sanctions a collection, the history of which is unknown, the books of which are for the most part anonymous, and the contents of which raise a crowd of objections—much more has he sanctioned a collection which was equally formed we know not well how; the authors of which are in part unknown, but of which the religious character is much superior.

You lay open new worlds, I said; I could not have thought that so many things would be drawn from nothing. It is a veritable creation *ex nihilo*. You will change the whole face of theology.

Had I not reason for declaring that I had found the point of support needed by Archimedes?

But the Catholics—it is the Catholics that trouble me. I fear they will turn your method to their own account. Jesus Christ, they will say, frequented the temple, observed the Mosaic ceremonial, acknowledged the divine origin of the Jewish priesthood, and in so doing, implicitly sanctioned the divine origin of the ritual and priesthood of Catholicism. But let us return to the subject of our discussion—where were we?

I have established the divinity of the Bible. The book is infallible, and every Christian is bound to accept it as such, or to reject the infallibility of Jesus Christ himself; that is to say, his divinity, in other words, the foundation of Christianity.

I understand you. The infallibility of the book rests on the infallibility of the Lord. Now let us examine. You say that Jesus Christ was infallible. That means that he could not commit an error.

Yes.

And consequently that he never was in error?

Doubtless.

The two propositions are convertible; if he is infallible he does not err; if he does err, he is not infallible?

Of course.

Well: I declare that according to your view Jesus Christ is in error.

That is a little strong.

Observe that I say according to your view. It is you who accuse him of error.

That has the air of an unworthy pleasantry.

I employ no pleasantry. If Jesus Christ, as you pretend, held the books of the Old and New Testament as infallible, he certainly erred.

What? How know you that? That is precisely the question.

No question at all; is is a fact. I do not say that the fact is self-evident, since it does not appear certain to every mind; but I declare that the inauthenticity of the book of Daniel and of the second Epistle of Peter; that the historical, hermeneutical, and logical errors of the Bible, are facts much more clear than the propositions of which your dogmatic deduction consists,

But in what point does that deduction fail? Is anyone of the links too weak? Is there any break in the chain? If so, show me; if you are unable, acknowledge your inconsistency in not yielding to the authority of the Son of God.

You are wrong, my dear sir, in wishing to force me to pronounce a decision on your system. I do not think myself obliged to discuss it in detail. One reply suffices. The Bible, you say, is infallible, for such it is declared to be by Jesus Christ, who is infallibility itself. On my part, I reply; if Jesus Christ declares the Bible infallible, his testimony proves nothing; for in that case he certainly errs; and if he errs, he is not infallible.

Speak for yourself, he answered; say that such is your opinion.

As it is yours that Jesus Christ proclaims the divine origin of the Scriptures. These are two opposite opinions between which no one can decide with authority, and of which each will speak according to his light and his prejudices. That does not prevent my view having a real advantage over yours.

What advantage?

Its simplicity. No question lies within narrower limits, none is more elementary, none more accessible than that of ascertaining whether two evangelists contradict each other; whether a prediction has been accomplished; whether an apostle cites a prophet exactly. Now Matthew cites a passage which he ascribes to Jeremiah, (Matt. xxvii. 1.) I open my Bible and learn that the passage cited is found in Zechariah, (xi. 12, 13.) I conclude that the evangelist is mistaken. You cannot conceive an intellectual operation less complete. Quite different is it with your dogmatic deduction. It is composed of several propositions, each of which is more or less doubtful. It is not perfectly certain that the Gospel of John is authentic; it is not perfectly certain that the discourses attributed to Jesus in that Gospel are exactly reported; it is not perfectly certain, even according to that Gospel, that Jesus taught his consubstantiality with his Father; it is not perfectly certain that the Divinity of Christ involves his omniscience; it is not perfectly certain that the Lord intended to decide on questions of criticism and canonicity; it is not perfectly certain that in citing the Old Testament as he does, he admits its inspiration in the sense in which you take it; it is not perfectly certain that in referring to the law and the prophets, he acknowledges the divinity of the Canticles and the Ecclesiastes; it is not perfectly certain that in sanctioning the divinity of the Old Testament, he implicitly sanctions that of the New. How many points raised by each of those questions? How much room for doubt in the links of your argument?

One may doubt everything; rejoined the pastor; and as to you, you are known to be a sceptic. Most people, I am sure, would acknowledge some validity in the considerations I have presented to you.

Possibly so. Have you never found something specious in the arguments of Romanists? Bossuet, Möhler, have they never fascinated you? As for me, this is the way in which I escape from their delusions. When I have read some ingenious or eloquent dissertation on the infallibility of the Church of Rome, I think forthwith of the Athanasian creed, the doctrine of Chalcedon, the theory of the sacraments, the assumption, or the immaculate conception of the Virgin, &c., &c., and I shake my head and say, "No! no! the Roman Church is not infallible—for it has erred."

So you do not believe that Jesus Christ regarded the Scriptures as infallible?

I hold to my dilemma; if he had your opinions on the point, he was not infallible; if he was infallible, he certainly had not your opinions on the subject of the Scripture. One of these destroys the other. Establish that the Saviour understood the words, "It is written," as you understand them, and you aim a fatal blow at the authority of Jesus Christ.*

* Wherein lies the true authority of Christ may be found set forth in the latter part of Dr. Reville's Essay on the Subject—which also presents the only true solution of the question here raised as between the rival churches; and that other more important question which arises as between the rival churches and Christianity.

Editor.

THE ERRATA OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BY EDMUND SCHERER.

WE have had occasion to point out the influence which the historic circumstances in which they are placed has exercised upon our canonical writers, and we have seen that this influence does not suffer as to regard the Bible as inspired in the literal orthodox sense. But the sacred authors have fallen into errors of a more positive nature than are mere faults of quotation or of interpretation. These errors are for the most part contradictions, either of facts as differently related by different authors, or of biblical facts as compared with the certain data of history. We shall proceed to enumerate some of these errors, beginning with the least important, errors which, in fact, are only such when regarded from the dogmatic point of view, and which derive all their importance from doctrinal assumption.

It is known that the New Testament often contains different records of the same fact or of the same discourse. This is the case for example with the conversion of Paul, three accounts of which are found in the book of Acts; it is often the case in the gospels, especially in the three first, in which the words and actions of the Saviour are reproduced in texts at once the same and different. We have thus a test of comparison; and it is enough to be assured that the evangelists intended to report the same miracle or the same discourse, to have also the right to compare them one with the

other, and to see whether this comparison does not throw some light upon the question of inspiration.

The first fact which presents itself to us in our study of the discourses of the Saviour is, that the same words occur in the different gospels in quite different contexts. Thus many of the portions of the Sermon on the Mount, as Matthew has recorded it, are entirely wanting in the record of this discourse, which Luke has preserved, and appear on different occasions in chapters xi. xiii. xvi. and especially in chapter xii. of this latter evangelist's gospel. The instructions of Jesus to his apostles (Matth. x.) are found partly in Luke x., in reference to the missions of the seventy disciples, and partly in Luke xxi., in the middle of the discourse about the ruin of Jerusalem and the end of all things. Of the parables which we find together in Matth. xiii., one is found in the viii., and one in the xiii. chapter of Luke. The address, in respect to the Scribes and Pharisees (Matth. xxiii.) corresponds as to the circumstances with Luke xx. 45—47, and as to its subject matter with Luke xi. 37—45. Many more examples might be given: any number may be found by opening any harmony of the gospels. Between two contexts we must choose; we must admit that if one is exact, the other is not exact; possibly that neither is exact. There is then error, in this respect, in the evangelic records: infallibility has not been brought to bear on this point at any rate. And yet, how many times does religious teaching insist upon the contexts in which the words of Jesus are found, and how many lessons are drawn from these contexts! Calvin, for his part, has made no difficulty in admitting that Matthew and Luke composed the discourses of the Saviour out of fragments, collected from different times and places. But if nothing is more simple than this, from the historical point of view, it is, by no means, so simple in reference to the question of inspiration. The evangelists

by no means give us their accounts as a collection of separate memoranda: they have no consciousness of this process: they believe in the correctness of the context which they give; and when they place any phrase, or set of phrases, in connection with historical circumstances where it was not spoken, they evidently commit an error which cannot be reconciled with the supernatural intervention of the Holy Spirit. But there is something yet more serious.

The discourses which occur in several of the gospels, and respecting the general identity of which there can be no doubt, are, however, not reported in identical words. It follows, that we do not possess these discourses literally as they were spoken, or under a genuine form. Jesus, according to Matthew, says, that men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles; according to Luke, he names two kinds of thorn bushes, thorns and brambles (Matthew vii. 16; Luke vi. 44)—We read in the one, “not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven.” In the other we read, “and why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Matthew vii. 21; Luke vi. 46). After the parable of the husbandmen, who slew such as were sent unto them, Jesus asks the Pharisees what punishment these husbandmen had to expect from the Lord of the vineyard. “They say unto him, he will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto others.” Such is the account of Matthew. Mark and Luke put the answer of the Pharisees into the mouth of Jesus himself. (Matthew xxi. 41; Mark xii. 9; Luke xx. 16)—The same is the case with the question as to the lawfulness of healing on the sabbath day; a question which Matthew puts into the mouth of the Jews, whilst Mark and Luke put it into the mouth of Jesus. (Matthew xii. 10; Mark iii. 4; Luke vi. 9)—Christ, accord-

ing to one evangelist, forbade the apostles to carry with them, on their journey, *staves*: according to another, this is exactly the only thing that he allows them to take (Matthew x. 10; Mark vi. 8)—In one place we read “and if any man will * * * take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.” But it is more natural to suppose that anyone would take first the outer garment, and Luke has more exactly “and him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also.” (Matthew v. 40; Luke vi. 29)—With what right can literalism, in the face of these facts, present to us every word as genuine, and every particle as divine?

Besides these differences, as to the context, and as to the expressions of the evangelical discourses, there are others which even affect the ideas and the thoughts. Here is an example. There can be no doubt as to the general identity of the Sermon on the Mount as reported to us by Matthew and Luke. But these reports commence with the beatitudes, and both conclude with the simile of the house founded on the rock; it is sufficiently clear that both authors intend to relate the same discourse, and there are, in fact, many passages in both which are evidently only different versions of the same original. And yet, see how far diversity can extend! In the beatitudes of Matthew all is spiritual, the need as well as the promise: whilst in Luke, the hunger is a real hunger, the poverty an actual poverty, and the satisfying of the hunger a merely material satisfying.

And if the case is thus with discourses which we can test by the comparison of the different accounts, it is clear that we have no right to admit the literal correctness of those in regard to which we have not this power of comparison. The discourses reported in the Gospel of John or in the Book of the Acts, have no right to any special privilege, arising from the insufficiency of our critical resources.

The consequences of the facts just stated are so threatening to the orthodox system, that it has been found necessary to attempt to explain them. The sixteenth century was free enough, because men were still sufficiently believers not to trouble themselves about facts. The seventeenth interposed, here, as everywhere else, with its petrified theology and its iron dogmatism. Heroically faithful to their theopneustic notions, the harmonists of that period laid it down as a principle that there could not be in the inspired accounts any difference either in the thoughts, or in the expressions, or even in the context of the discourses of the Saviour. According to this principle, as many discourses are admitted as the exigencies of the text require. Jesus, therefore, not only repeated at times some words of a meaning at once enigmatical and manifold, some sentences of a proverbial turn of expression and of general application; but he must sometimes have repeated precisely the same words, like a schoolboy learning his lesson, or an actor studying his part. We have all read with emotion the words at once reproachful and compassionate, addressed by the Saviour to an incredulous city: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." These words are related by Luke and by Matthew in the very same terms, but under different circumstances. According to the former, Jesus uttered them on his way to Jerusalem: according to the latter in Jerusalem itself. (Luke xiii. 34: Matt. xxiii. 37.) It is in vain to urge that these words spring from the heart, that all their significance, all their truth depends on the feeling which prompted them, and that they can no more be repeated than they could have been committed to memory: in vain to say that the Master who teaches is lost here behind

the Saviour who laments: dogmatism has spoken, and inspiration requires that Jesus should express his grief *twice* in terms stereotyped for that purpose. When a system has got so far as this, the accusation against it is not one of subtlety, but of profanation!

What we have said of the words of Jesus, we say also of his actions. When we consider the matter closely, there are many differences which are in themselves contradictions. When Mark and Luke speak of one demoniac, where Matthew speaks of two, the account of the first implies that there was only one. When Mark and Luke record that Jesus cured a blind man, the latter as he was entering Jericho, the former as he was leaving that town, it is clear that there is a contradiction. It is useless to endeavour to solve this difficulty by supposing two blind men healed, for the two records prevent such a supposition by their very resemblance. Everything is identical, the cry of the blind man, the opposition of the disciples, the perseverance of Bartimaeus, the question of Jesus, the answer, the words in which the Saviour announces the cure, the eagerness of the healed man to follow his benefactor, everything except the side of the town on which the fact took place. To suppose such an exact repetition of all the circumstances of any fact, must be, it must be said, the height of blindness or of bad faith. The case is the same with the three portions of the temptation of the Lord, the natural order of which as given by Matthew has been inverted by Luke, and this without any indication or indeed any suspicion that it has been so inverted. The case is the same with reference to the two thieves, crucified with Jesus. According to Matthew they both insulted their fellow-sufferer: according to Luke one was full of repentance. One of these accounts must necessarily be incorrect.

When Paul, relating his conversion to Agrippa puts into the mouth of the Lord and places at the very period of his apparition, words (Acts xxvi. 16, sqq.,) which according to other accounts of the same fact, are only addressed to him several days afterwards, and by the mouth of Annanias, we have here liberty taken with facts very venial in itself but fatal to the verbal inspiration theory.

The most remarkable however, and the most decisive fact of this kind is the following. Luke and Matthew both record the history of the centurion, whose faith was expressed in a simple manner, and whose servant was healed by Jesus. One tells us, however, that the centurion came himself to Jesus, the other that he only sent a messenger to him. We pass by the other peculiarities of the two accounts, and we ask, Is there not here a contradiction? Is it not true that we must choose between the two reporters? When Matthew writes that a centurion came to Christ and spoke to him, can this be interpreted to mean that he sent a message to him by a third person? Or must we not do violence to our common sense if we endeavour to avoid the evidence which such a fact furnishes?

We shall conclude this portion of our enquiries by an enumeration of various passages in the New Testament, in which, if the error is not more manifest, it is at any rate more serious than in the preceeding cases.

I. Matthew begins his Gospel with a genealogical table of the descent of Joseph, the husband of Mary. This genealogy, which goes from Abraham to David, from David to the captivity, and from the captivity to the birth of Jesus, which therefore takes in the principle points in the history of the people of God, is intended to connect the birth of the Messiah with the economy of this history. Such is, in especial, the intention of the division of the genealogy into three equal

series, of fourteen names each, the writer seeking to bring out the relation which he indicates and in some sort the divine thought contained, by the symmetry of numbers. In any case, the table of which we speak presents many difficulties generally acknowledged. In the first place, Rahab is represented (v. 5.) as the wife of Salmon, son of Naasson, and is the great-great-grandmother of David: but between the taking of Jericho and the birth of David there is an interval of nearly 400 years, for which interval the table in Matthew only gives three generations. The error arises from the fact of the evangelist having copied on trust the genealogy given at the end of the Book of Ruth, where there is a gap of about six generations. In the second place, Matthew omits between Joram and Ozias, (v. 8,) we know not why, three kings, Ahasiah, Joash, and Amaziah. In the third place, in v. 11, between Josias and Jechonias he omits Jehoiakim, and gives brethren to Jechonias, who had none, whilst Jehoiakim had. Now Jechonias was also called Jehoiakin: hence it is clear that the evangelist has confounded the similar names, and has made only one person of Jehoiakin or Jechonias and his father Jehoiakim. In the fourth place, at v. 12, Matthew omits another name, that of Pedaiah, between Salathiel and Zorobabel, because he has followed Ezra v. 2, instead of 1 Chron. iii. 19.

But this is not all. Matthew has so little suspicion of these omissions in his genealogy which amount altogether to ten or eleven generations, that he considers it to include *all* the generations from Abraham to Christ, (v. 17,) and proceeds to establish among these fictitious numbers a certain symmetrical connection which disappears as soon as the gaps have been discovered. And beyond this, this very symmetry, remarkably enough, is illusory even from Matthew's own point of view, and supposing his genealogy to be correct. In

fact, in order to obtain three series of fourteen names each, it is not only necessary to reckon Jesus himself, which presents no difficulty, but it is necessary to count David twice, once at the end of the first series, and once at the commencement of the second, an arbitrary mode of calculation which the expressions of v. 17, show that the evangelist intended to adopt. Here, however, there is a third difficulty, the second series thus terminating with Josias, and the third commencing with Jechonias, who according to v. 11, (comp. v. 12,) belongs, at any rate as to his birth, to the period anterior to the Babylonish Captivity.

II. Considered by itself, the genealogy furnished by Matthew cannot stand a critical examination. Considered alone, the genealogy of Luke calls for but little remark. At the same time, when he makes Salathiel the son of Neri, (iii. 27), he is in contradiction with I Chron. iii. 17 : further, when he makes Rhesa the son of Zorobabel, (iii. 27,) he inserts a name not known to the compiler of the list in 1 Chron. iii. 19, 20 : and again Luke has followed the Septuagint instead of the Hebrew text, when he makes Cainan instead of Salah the son of Arphaxad, (Gen. xi, 12.)

On the other hand there are between the genealogies given by Luke and Matthew, differences which have often been noted. Luke goes as far back as Adam, and Matthew only as far back as Abraham : but in the corresponding portions of the two tables there is hardly the slightest resemblance. The only points of contact are the following : the point of departure, David : the point of arrival, Joseph, the husband of Mary : and between them, of all the names cited, only two, Salathiel and his son Zorobabel. All the other names are different. Matthew, after David, starts from Solomon, Luke from Nathan ; Matthew makes Jechonias the father of Salathiel, Luke, Neri ; Matthew makes Abinadab the

son of Zorobabel, Luke, Rhesa, ; Matthew gives as the father of the husband of Mary, an individual named Jacob, Luke, a personage of the name of Heli. The names in Matthew are of the royal race, whilst those in Luke are totally unknown, except the two which he has in common with Matthew. Finally, Luke reckons forty-two generations, Whilst Matthew has only twenty-seven.

We have then two different genealogies : how are they to be reconciled ? Here has been a grand field of conjecture for theologians of all times ! The oldest of these conjectures is the supposition of one of those marriages, where the brother of the deceased married his widow, the dead man having left no children, (Deut. xxv.) According to this theory, Jacob was the first husband of the mother of Joseph, and Heli the second, or *vice versâ*. It is true that according to this hypothesis, Jacob and Heli being brothers, their ancestors must have been the same, and the two lists ought therefore to have agreed. To meet this difficulty another supposition has been found necessary, namely, that Jacob and Heli were only uterine brothers, and were the sons of different fathers. Even this however, is not sufficient, and to explain the coincidence between the two lists as to the names of Zorobabel and Salathiel, this same double hypothesis has to be renewed respecting the father of Salathiel : and even then remains to be explained how one of the evangelists makes Abind the son of Zorobabel, and the other Rhesa.

The wish to avoid so many arbitrary and at the same time unsatisfactory suppositions has given rise to another explanation. Most modern interpreters admit that the genealogy in the first Gospel is that of Joseph, and that in the third Gospel that of Mary. In support of this idea it is alleged that Luke indicates at the commencement of his table the supernatural birth of Jesus, (iii. 23,) and that he could therefore

have had no intention of giving a genealogy of Joseph, between whom and Jesus he had just denied any natural relationship: but this allegation leaves out of sight that Matthew indicates precisely the same idea at the end of his table, (i. 16,) which corresponds with the commencement of Luke's, and that in any case he knows of and records the miraculous conception, (i. 18.) Besides no effort of interpretation, no possible conjecture can make us believe that the name of Joseph, in Luke iii. 23, means Mary, or that the genitive case, which in all the rest of the table expresses direct descent implies here only the relationship of son-in-law. Why, and in what possible connection, or with what conceivable object should Luke have named Joseph instead of Mary if he wished to give the genealogy of this latter, and have made use of this obscure form of words? Why should he have named Joseph, when he thereby expressly obliged himself to add that he was not really the father of Jesus? It is as well also to recollect that this solution, already opposed by Calvin, gives no account of the difficulties arising from the names of Salathiel and Zorobabel, and compels recourse to be had at least once to the hypothesis of a levirat-marriage.

III. Luke (ii. 1, sqq.) accounts for the presence of Joseph and Mary at Bethlehem, at the period of the birth of Jesus, by the necessity imposed upon Joseph of going up to be taxed in the city of his birth, in conformity with an edict of Augustus, which commanded a census to be made of the inhabitants of the whole Roman empire. The evangelist adds, "this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria;" or more correctly, "this taxing, which was the first, this first taxing took place whilst Quirinius was governor of Syria." What these Roman taxings or censuses was is well known. All the citizens were enrolled, with the amount of their property, to facilitate the collection of the taxes; and

whenever a country became a Roman province, it was made to submit to an operation of this kind.

There are no less than five difficulties in this passage in Luke. I begin with the least serious.

In the first place, v. 5, says that Joseph went to Bethlehem with Mary, to be enrolled with her, which implies that her presence was necessary in reference to this enrolment. Indeed nothing but necessity could have induced her to undertake such a journey at a time so near to that of the birth of her child. But this necessity is by no means evident; indeed, in order to establish it, we are obliged to have recourse to some clauses of the Roman or Jewish law according to which Mary must have been an heiress, or have been possessed of an independent fortune. But the poverty of the married couple renders such hypothesis very doubtful.

In the second place, the Jewish manner of enrolment was regulated undoubtedly by the place whence each family derived its origin: but the Roman enrolment was made according to the domicile of individuals. Now the manner in which Joseph and Mary were lodged at Bethlehem proves sufficiently that they were strangers in that town. A learned jurist has contested this point, and has asserted that the place where the Roman enrolment was carried out, was the town of which each person was a municipal citizen, that is to say, in which each person was born. But Luke does not assert that Joseph was born at Bethlehem; he says only that he went up because he was of the house and lineage of David (v. 4.) Others have supposed without any authority, that an enrolment in Judea would have been conducted according to Jewish forms.

In the third place, it has been asked how an enrolment of the Roman empire could have extended to Judea, which was then an independent kingdom under Herod the Great; which consequently was not a part of the Roman empire, and where

the taxes were received not by the Romans, but by Herod. The attempts to explain this, the efforts to find similar facts elsewhere in history, have had only one result, to set more clearly in view the improbability, not to say the impossibility of the fact recorded by Luke.

This again brings us to a fourth difficulty. The taxing of which Luke speaks, is a taxing of all the world, that is according to the hyperbolic form of expression, of all the Roman empire. There must have been therefore a general census of the empire, in the reign of Augustus, about the time of the birth of Jesus Christ. How is it then that neither Josephus nor any other ancient historian, has the slightest knowledge of such a census, though they record two or three others ordered by Augustus? Pretended testimony has certainly been adduced of the fact; but some of the witnesses, like Dio Cassius and the tables of Ancyra, are unworthy of credit, and some others, as Cassiodorus, Isidore, and Suidas, rest entirely upon the authority of this passage itself.

There remains another point which is decisive. Luke speaks of this taxing as "the first," and as having been carried out when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Now at the time of the birth of Christ, Quirinius was not governor of Syria; and besides by the words "the first," Luke distinguishes this taxing, from another one well known, of which he himself speaks, Acts v. 37, which took place two years later, and which was carried out under the orders of the very Quirinius, to whom Luke here attributes an operation with which he can have had nothing to do. At the death of Herod the Great, four years B. C., (according to our incorrect mode of reckoning,) the kingdom of this prince was divided between his three sons. One of them, Archelaus, received Judea, Idumea, and Samaria: but after a reign of ten years, he was accused at Rome of tyrannical conduct, deposed by

the Emperor and exiled to Gaul. The possessions which had composed his kingdom, were not given to another king, but were united with the Roman province of Syria, which was governed by a pro-consul, resident at Antioch. This new portion of the province of Syria was specially governed by a Roman procurator, under the pro-consul of Syria, and resident at Cesarea. We know many of these procurators from the New Testament, Pontius Pilate, Felix, Festus. We know also from other sources the pro-consuls of Syria: he who held that office at the time of the birth of Christ was Sentius Saturninus: after whom came Quintilius Varus, and then the Sulpicius Quirinius, of whom Luke speaks. He was governor of Syria when the kingdom of Archelaus was added to that province, and he consequently, according to Roman custom, organised a census of property in the new countries incorporated with the empire. This occurred in the year 6 of our era, ten years after the death of Herod, eleven or twelve years after the birth of Jesus Christ, that is, after the time which Luke has fixed for his so called *first taxing*.

And hence, supposing even that there had been, at the time indicated by Luke, a first taxing unknown to all other historians, there is still a capital error in our Gospel, in that the author makes the government of Quirinius coexistent with the birth of Christ. It is amusing to see the efforts of orthodox exegesis to escape from so terrible a result. Theodore Beza, in the three first editions of his Commentary, and many more after him, have cut the knot which they could not untie, and have asserted that v. 2 of our passage is an interpolation. Others have wished to understand the term *governor* as referring not only to the proconsulate of Quirinius, but also to a special mission from the emperor in reference to this very census—an interpretation which the context renders inadmissible. Others have changed the accent of one of the Greek

words, and have translated "the first taxing *itself* took place when etc." But what is the meaning of this phrase? How could the taxing of Quirinius be said to be the first at the very time when Luke is speaking of a preceding one? Or can the meaning be that the taxing, commenced by Saturninus, was interrupted, and afterwards completed by Quirinius? But then what mean the words, the *first*? And how can this idea be reconciled with v. 3, which shows us the edict of Augustus in full course of execution? The interpreters of our day therefore have had recourse to a new explanation. It has been agreed to accept *the first* in the sense of the preposition *before*, and to translate, "This taxing took place *before* Quirinius was governor of Syria." This parenthesis would then be intended to distinguish this census from the later census presided over by Quirinius: but it must be confessed that the distinction would be pointed out in a remarkably indirect manner. Besides the construction of the Greek language does not admit of the proposed interpretation, and the examples produced in favour of this supposed meaning have only demonstrated the absence of any philological argument in support of a desperate hypothesis. It is true that the defenders of Luke go so far as to admit the incorrectness of the interpretation which they defend: in other words, they endeavour to get rid of the error in chronology by allowing a mistake in grammar. This process is however, at the same time too convenient and too violent.

It is clear then that Luke has committed a chronological error in making the pro-consulship of Quirinius coeval with the birth of Christ. Is this all?—and by admitting this error can we accept the remainder of the statements which Luke makes? Was there in fact a general census about the year 6 of our era, and is the error of Luke simply an error of memory, making him give the name of Quirinius of this

census, which he confounded in this respect alone with a later census? Such an explanation does not do away with the other difficulties which we have found in this account of the Evangelist. It must be remarked besides that Luke does not regard the later census as identical with that of which he speaks here; he distinguishes them on the contrary, he knows of two, since he mentions a second in the Book of Acts, and especially since he alludes to that one even here by the expression *the first*. Luke appears to have doubled, so to speak, the census of Quirinius, of one he has made two, and inasmuch as the former had no historical reality, he has reported of this first one all that he knew of the second: in other words Luke only distinguishes them as to number, and identifies them as to character and circumstances. This explains to us how he could not only make the first taxing take place under the orders of Quirinius, but also confound the period when Judea was an independent kingdom with the time when it formed part of the Roman empire. It is true that Luke makes the first to be a general census of the empire, whilst the second was only a census of Judea: it is true that the real census of Quirinius did not precisely take in Galilee, where Luke shows us the work in full activity: but there is nothing to show that Luke, a Greek by birth, a stranger to Palestine, residing at a distance from the events he narrates, knew that the census was thus limited.

Strictly speaking, if we are to rely upon the Jewish method of enrolment which v. 4 seems to imply, we might admit that Luke was only mistaken in taking for a general census some purely Jewish enrolment ordered by Herod. But the fact itself of the enrolment seems to have been *imagined* by Luke, or rather by the tradition, for the purpose of explaining the presence of the parents of Jesus Christ at Bethlehem at the time of his birth. Matthew accounts for it

in another way. He does not report the journey of which Luke speaks: he supposes that Joseph and Mary resided at Bethlehem, and only settled at Nazareth after the birth of Jesus, and to escape the dangers which they feared in Judea. (ii. 22, 23.)

IV. Matthew reports that Herod wished to put John Baptist to death, but was prevented by the respect which the people had for him as a prophet. Hence the regret experienced by the king on account of his rash promise to the daughter of Herodias can only be explained by his unwillingness to do anything which he considered impolitic, (Matt. xiv. 5, 9.) Mark represents the matter in quite a different light, (Mark vi. 19, 20.) According to him, Herodias alone desired the death of the prophet, whilst Herod "feared John, and observed him:" liked to hear him and was guided in many things by his influence.

V. Jesus, according to Matthew xxiii. 35, speaks of "all the righteous blood shed—from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias." We do not press the point that the murder of Zacharias was not in reality the last of the events of this kind recorded in the Old Testament. The prophet Urijah, put to death in the reign of Jehoiakim, (Jerem. xxvi. 23,) was later than Zacharias. The expression put into the mouth of Christ is to a certain extent a proverbial one; no account was taken of the murder recorded by Jeremiah, whose book was not properly a historical one; and the Book of Chronicles, which related the murder of Zacharias was regarded as closing the history of the people, as it was the last of the Jewish Canon. But what is a positive error is the designation "son of Barachias." The Evangelist has confounded the prophet Zachariah, whose correct designation this was, (but of the manner of whose death we know nothing of) with the priest Zachariah, son of Jehoi-

dah, who was murdered in the reign of Isaiah in the court of the temple, (2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22.) This difficulty has been sought to be explained away by the fact that the names Jehoidah and Barachiah have some resemblance in signification, as if the use of proper names was regulated by etymology. Other interpreters have chosen to see in these words a prediction referring to the death of a certain Zachariah, son of Baruch, of whom Josephus speaks, and who perished thirty years after Jesus Christ! But a comparison with Zach. i. 1, puts an end to all conjectures, showing not only the error, but the origin of the error. And unfortunately, there is not the slightest variation. Here at least is an error, clearly shown, allowed by all, if we mistake not: in other words, here is a breach made in the system of absolute inspiration.

VI. The result is far less clear in reference to Matt. xxvii. 9. The Evangelist quotes a passage from the Old Testament as taken from Jeremiah: but the passage is not in Jeremiah, but (with the exception of some arbitrary changes,) in Zachariah, (xi. 13.) There is then an error, and moreover, an error the origin of which is easily discovered.. Matthew introduces arbitrarily into his quotation the purchase of the field of a potter: now mention is made of a potter in one passage of Jeremiah, and of the purchase of a field in another passage of the same prophet, (Jerem. xviii. 2; xxxii. 7.) Hence a confusion analogous to that of which we have just spoken, Augustine thought that the Holy Spirit permitted this error in order to show that all the prophets are as it were one and the same instrument of God, (August. De Consensu Evang. iii. 7. (29, 30).) Calvin has the good faith to admit that there is an error, without seeking to explain or to excuse it.

VII. Mark makes Christ say, (Mark ii. 26,) that David took the shew-bread when Abiathar was high-priest, a fact

which is not recorded in the parallel passage in Matthew. This record rests upon a confusion of names and is an error. The fact took place during the high-priesthood of Abimelech, son of Abitub, and father of Abiathar, (1 Sam. xxi. 1 ; xxii. 11. 20.) Mark has confounded the son with the father : and indeed the same confusion is found also in the Old Testament, (2 Sam. viii. 17 ; 1 Chron. xviii. 16 ; xxiv. 6.

VIII. According to Matt. xxi. Jesus enters Jerusalem (v. 10,) goes to the temple, where he drives out those that sold therein, (v. 12,) and in the evening of the same day goes to Bethany, where he passes the night (v. 17). The account in Luke also implies that he drove out the sellers from the temple the same day that he arrived in Jerusalem. It is different with Mark (xi. ii.) according to whom, Jesus entered into the temple immediately after his arrival at Jerusalem, then went out to Bethany because it was late, and only cast out the buyers and sellers on the next day. (v. 15.)

IX. In reference to this same fact, the difference between the three first evangelists and the last is still much greater. The action is absolutely the same, except that mention is made of the whip of small cords ; the terms in which it is recorded are almost identical ; the words pronounced by Jesus closely resemble each other in the two accounts ; the event in both cases happens when Jesus comes to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover : in short, the two accounts are so like that it would never have entered into any one's head to suppose them to refer to two different events, if John had not mentioned as occurring on the first journey to Jerusalem, what the other evangelists record to have happened at the last. It remains to be considered whether this reason is sufficient, or whether it is not more simple, not to say more necessary, to admit an historical contradiction. This necessity seems to me to arise very clearly from three considerations.

The first is that the record in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, contains no reference to a previous fact of the same kind. The second is the impossibility of admitting that Jesus twice went through exactly the same actions, and used the same words, particularly in a case where the actions and words would lose all sense, not to say all dignity, by the mere fact of their repetition. The third is, that if the fact recorded did take place on a former journey of the Saviour to Jerusalem, the three first evangelists, who only report one journey of the kind, who only know of one, namely the last, have been necessarily obliged to record the fact in relation to the only entry into Jerusalem with which they were acquainted.

X. The gospel of John is in contradiction with the three other gospels in many points of the history of the passion and resurrection of Christ. One of the most serious of these contradictions has reference to the last supper and to the chronology of the whole week of the passion. The four evangelists agree that the last supper took place on the Thursday evening, the crucifixion on the Friday, and the resurrection on the Sunday; but they differ as to which of these days it was on which occurred the feast of the Passover. According to John, this festival occurred that year on the Sabbath, or Saturday, and consequently Christ was crucified the day before the Passover, and the last supper of which he partook with his disciples had nothing in common with the festival: according to the other evangelists, the Passover occurred upon the Friday, Christ was crucified on the very day of the festival, and his last meal was the Paschal supper. It must be remembered that the Jewish day began at sunset, and consequently that the Paschal supper, with which the festival commenced, took place on the evening before the day which we call the Passover.

Nothing can be more clear than this contradiction. The three first evangelists report that the apostles asked Jesus where they were to prepare the Paschal supper for him and for themselves, and that, after receiving his answer, they made the necessary preparations. This was done on the day usually devoted to such preparations, or as Mark says, the day when they killed the passover. (Matt. xxvi., 17; Mark xiv., 12; Luke xxv., 7.) When the evening was come, he sat down with them to partake of the repast thus prepared. The words in Luke xxii., 15, would if needful confirm the fact that this was really the Passover, the legal and regular Paschal supper. As to John, he also speaks of a last repast of Jesus with his disciples; but far from attributing to this repast, the character of the Paschal supper, he places it before the feast of the Passover (xiii. 1—4), a position which is confirmed afterwards by the supposition of the eleven in reference to the departure of Judas (xiii. 29).

The accounts of the events of the following day bring us to the same result. Jesus, after the repast of which we have spoken, goes forth out of the city, is taken during the night and brought before Caiaphas, and the next morning before Pilate. According to the three first evangelists, this Friday belongs to the festival of the Passover, which had commenced the evening before; according to John the festival had not yet been celebrated, and would only commence that evening after sunset. For this reason the Jews take Jesus to the pretorium, but refuse to enter in lest they should be defiled, and thus unable to eat the Passover (John xiii. 28.) They had not therefore already eaten it, the Paschal supper had not yet taken place, the festival had not yet begun, and John's narrative formally contradicts that of the other sacred historians.

Two other passages support this result. John calls the

day upon which Jesus was crucified, the Friday, the day of the preparation of the Passover, and moreover he says that the day following, which was a Sabbath, was to be an important Sabbath ("an high day") which can only be understood of the coincidence of the Sabbath with the festival of the Passover. (John xix. 14, 31.)

Many reasons appear to decide in favour of the account of John, and to confirm the genuineness of the fourth gospel. It is difficult not to suppose that tradition, when it represented the last supper of Jesus to have been the Paschal supper, gave in to a certain Jewish-Christian tendency. The necessity was felt of making the Last Supper coincide with the Passover, so as to square the type with the antitype.*

XI. The differences between the four Gospels, in reference to the denial of the apostle Peter, are of little importance as to the facts themselves, but numerous and evident enough to present insurmountable obstacles in the way of complete inspiration.

In the first place Mark, in conformity with the manner in which he records the prediction of Jesus, (xiv. 30,) represents the cock as crowing thrice, at the first and at the third denial, whilst the other evangelists only represent him as crowing at the third. And remark that the prediction in Matthew, (xxvi. 34,) excludes any idea of reconciliation.

And then as to the denial itself.

The circumstances of the first denial of Peter are similar or at least reconcilable in the four accounts.

It is not so however with the second denial. Matthew and Mark agree pretty well, except that according to Matthew

* (Note.—See on this point the *Revue de Theologie*, vol. II. p. 71, sqq. We have to remark here that M. Ebrard, after having endeavoured in his first edition, to reconcile the two accounts, has given up this attempt in his second edition. Another theologian, no less firmly attached to the orthodox dogma, Kahnis, has been compelled to make the same concession. It is true that still more recently M. Luthardt has reintroduced the forced interpretations of Hengstenberg.)

the servant who questioned Peter is a different one from the first, while according to Mark it is the same. As to Luke and John, they agree with one another, but they differ from the two first both in respect to the place and to the person who puts the question to the Apostle. Luke and John indicate no change of place, and consequently leave us in the court, which is confirmed by the mention in John that Peter was standing and warming himself, (John xvii. 15, 18, 35; Luke xxii. 55 :) according to Matthew and Mark on the contrary, Peter was gone into the porch. Besides according to John, the question is put generally by those who were present, ("They said unto him"); according to Luke it is a man, (another, masculine, and his answer, *Man*); according to Matthew and Mark, it was a servant maid.

There is also a difference in respect to the third denial. Luke gives us a period of an hour as elapsing between this denial and the preceding one, whilst Matthew and Mark say "a little after." It is true that this last expression is vague, and that length of time is quite a relative question. It is more difficult to reconcile the different accounts in respect of the words in answer to which Peter forswore himself. In fact in the three first Gospels, those who were present, or one of them, recognise him by his provincial pronunciation to be a Galilean, and consequently a disciple of Jesus. According to John on the contrary, he who addresses Peter is a relation of that Malchus whose ear Peter had cut off, and he alleges not the accent of the apostle, but the recollection of having seen him in the garden of Gethsemane with Jesus. The difficulty is avoided by supposing that the two remarks were addressed to Peter at the same time, and that he replied to both by the same denial!

XII. The account of the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection is full of insurmountable difficulties to any one deter-

mined not to admit of any error in any of the records. According to Matthew, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, go to the sepulchre; an angel declares to them that Jesus is risen, orders them to announce the fact to his disciples, and adds that Jesus would go before them into Galilee, where they should see him. The two women leave the sepulchre; but Jesus himself appears to them on their way, and orders them to tell his brethren to go into Galilee, where they should see him. The eleven apostles go in fact to Galilee, meet Jesus in the mountain where he had appointed them, and receive from him their apostolic mission. And with this the gospel ends.

According to Mark, the women who go to the sepulchre on the morning of the first day, are three in number, the two Maries and Salome. They find an angel, who also points out to them Galilee as the place where the disciples should see Jesus. Notwithstanding Jesus appears that same day, first to Mary Magdalene, then to two disciples on the road, and lastly to the eleven. And on this last occasion he gives them their apostolic mission and then ascends into heaven.

According to Luke, the women who go to the sepulchre are the Maries, Joanna, and others besides. Two angels appear to them and announce the resurrection, but without saying anything of the journey to Galilee. Jesus appears the same day, to Peter first, then to two disciples on the way to Emmaus, finally to the eleven apostles and the disciples, gives them the apostolic mission, and leads them out as far as Bethany, whence he ascends to heaven. Let us add, that according to the book of the Acts, there is another difference. According to this account, Jesus remained forty days on earth, appearing to the apostles, giving them further instructions, working miracles, and it is only after the end of

this time, that having solemnly given them the apostolic injunction, he ascends into heaven.

John only names Mary Magdalene as going to the sepulchre (xx. 1.); but the use of the plural in the next verse "we know not" implies that she was not alone. Nothing is said about angels in this portion of the account. Mary sees that the stone has been taken away, goes back to inform Peter and John, who run to the sepulchre, returns herself after they have left, and it is then that she sees the two angels, and that Jesus appears to her. He sends her to announce his resurrection to his brethren, also without speaking of Galilee. The same evening he appears to the apostles, among whom Thomas alone is wanting, and confers upon them the apostolic mission with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Eight days after he again appears to the apostles, among whom this time Thomas is present. Here the gospel properly concludes (xx., 30, 31), but an appendix records another appearance of Jesus in Galilee to six or seven disciples, and accompanied by a miracle. (xxi.)

Let us now examine the relation of the various accounts to one another. Not to embarrass the question we may leave on one side two points of criticism, which affect it very nearly, the genuineness of Mark xvi., 9—20, and of the last chapter of John.

The four accounts may be reconciled as to the number and names of the women who visit the sepulchre on the morning of the first day of the week. One names one, another two, another three, and the other yet more, but there is here no real difficulty.

The same thing may be said of the angels, although Luke mentions two, Matthew and Mark only one, and John only introduces them later on.

But what is infinitely more serious is what refers to the

circumstances and the number of the appearances of Jesus, and to the duration of his sojourn on earth after his resurrection. Matthew narrates a single appearance of Jesus, on the day of the resurrection and at Jerusalem; he appears to the women and directs them to inform the disciples that they shall see him again in Galilee. The account of Matthew does not merely pass over in silence other appearances which might have taken place at Jerusalem: it formally excludes any such appearances. Jesus appoints his disciples to meet him in Galilee, sees them there for the first and last time, and gives them his last instructions. Matt. xxviii., 16, 17, clearly implies that the disciples had not yet seen Jesus, and the conclusion of the account implies also that it was their last interview. In Mark, Luke, and John, leaving out the appendix to this last gospel, we find exactly the contrary. Jesus appears five times the first day, either at Jerusalem or in the immediate neighbourhood; eight days afterwards he appears again to the disciples in the same town, (John xx. 26); he takes leave of his disciples at Bethany, quite near to Jerusalem: in a word, the accounts of Mark, Luke, and John ignore and exclude the appearance in Galilee as completely as the account of Matthew excludes those which took place in Judea.

Again, how long did Jesus remain on earth after his resurrection? The impression left by Matthew's account is that he only remained long enough to allow the disciples to arrive at the meeting place in Galilee. If we only consult the Gospels of Mark and Luke (see especially Mark xvi. 19.), the different appearances, the instructions to the apostles and the ascension all took place on the very day of the resurrection. John in his 20th chapter gives no other indications of chronology than the period of eight days which elapsed between the first and second appearance to the apostles. And finally, if we only had the passage Acts i. 3, it would be impossible to

doubt that Jesus passed forty days on earth between his resurrection and his ascension: but the accounts of Matthew and of Mark leave no place for a supposition of this kind.*

In fact however, we may leave out of the question the difficulties arising from the silence of one or other of the evangelists; we may leave on one side the omission of the ascension in Matthew and John; we need not even compare the different versions of the instructions of the Saviour as to the apostolic mission, (Matt. xxvii. 18—20; Mark xvi. 15—18; Luke xxiv. 46—49; Acts i. 8; John xx. 21—23); we need not compare with the accounts of the evangelists the enumeration which Paul gives of the appearances of Jesus (1 Cor. xv. 5—8). It is sufficient to the purpose we have in view to restrict ourselves to positive contradictions.

According to Matthew (xxviii. 8) the women hasten to obey the angel, and to announce the resurrection to the disciples. According to Mark (xvi. 8) they receive the same order, but are so afraid that they say nothing to any man.

According to Mark (xvi. 14) and Luke (xxiv. 33, 36), the eleven were present when Jesus appeared to them on the day of his resurrection: according to John (xx. 24) there were only ten of the apostles, as Thomas was not present.

According to Matthew, Jesus gives his last instructions to his apostles and takes leave of them in Galilee, and it is impossible, after this scene, to conceive of a repetition some days afterwards at Bethany, at the time of the ascension. Between the accounts of Matthew and Luke it is absolutely necessary to choose.

But the most serious difficulty is that which refers to Christ's first appearance. According to Matthew it occurs in the presence of the two Maries; according to Mark and John,

(Note.—The traditions did not all agree as to the length of time that Jesus passed on earth after his resurrection. The Valentinians believe that he remained eighteen months v. Irenæus, I. 3. § 2.)

in the presence of Mary Magdalene alone; whilst Luke says nothing of any appearance to the women. It is not possible to escape from this difficulty by alleging that the details given by one evangelist supply the want of details given by the others. In fact according to Matthew, it is on the road, whilst on their way to announce the resurrection to the apostles, that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary see the Lord (xxviii. 9.) According to John, on the contrary, Mary Magdalene comes to the sepulchre, finds it empty, goes to announce this fact to Peter and John, returns to the tomb, and there, alone, sees Jesus for the first time. There are here no less than four contradictions. 1.—According to Matthew, the two women, consequently Mary Magdalene, who is one of them, find the stone removed from the entrance of the sepulchre, but they enter into the tomb, hear the angel, and go to report to the apostles the news of the resurrection: according to John, Mary Magdalene finds the stone removed and the tomb empty, and this is the only report she brings to Peter and John. 2.—According to Matthew, it is as they are returning from their first visit to the sepulchre that Mary Magdalene and her companion see the Lord: according to John it is after she has informed the two apostles and has again gone to the sepulchre, that she sees Jesus. 3.—According to Matthew, Jesus appears to the two Maries at once: according to John, to Mary Magdalene alone. 4.—Finally, according to Matthew, Jesus appears to the two women on the road leading from the road to the town: according to John, Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene at the entrance of the tomb itself.

The usual method in which the difficulty is eluded is by the following supposition: Mary Magdalene and the other women came together to the sepulchre; Mary seeing from a distance that the stone was removed, immediately turned back to announce the fact to Peter and John; in the mean time, the

other women arrived at the sepulchre, saw the angel, received his instructions, and set out to carry them out. Peter and John on their part, followed at a distance by Mary, came to the tomb by another route to that which the women had taken, which accounts for their not having met them; they return: Mary comes to the sepulchre and sees Jesus there: and all this occurs before the other women had arrived at home, for Jesus, after having appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mark xvi 9.) appeared again to the women on their road. Nothing can well be more heroic than this hypothesis. Seldom have arbitrary supposition and the faculty of taking for granted been pushed further. But it is in vain. According to Matthew, Jesus appears to the two Maries at once, and on their way; according to John, one of these Maries announces to Peter and to John that they have taken away the body from the sepulchre, and that she does not know where they have put it. Nothing in the world can reconcile these two accounts.

XIII. Matthew xxvii., 5—8, is in threefold contradiction with Acts i., 18, 19.

According to Matthew, (v. 7) the priests buy a field with the money refused by Judas, and destine this field for the burial of strangers. According to Acts on the contrary, (v. 18) Judas had himself employed the purchase-money of his treachery in buying the field, and had made this acquisition for himself. The Greek verb signifies, *he purchased for himself*.

According to Matthew, the field received its name of the "field of blood," because the money with which it had been purchased had itself served first to purchase the blood of Christ (v. 8). It appears on the contrary from the account in Acts, that Judas himself perished in the field which he had bought, (v. 18) and that in consequence of this circumstance the field was called *Aceldama* (v. 19).

Finally, the two accounts differ completely as to the manner of the death of Judas. According to Matthew, he hanged himself (v. 5). According to the Acts, he fell headlong, and burst asunder in the midst. The account of Luke does not at all indicate the nature of a fall which must have been singularly violent, and this moderation in matters of detail has given rise to conjectures suited to reconcile such manifest discrepancies. The usual supposition is that Judas hanged himself, and that the cord having broken, his body burst asunder in the fall. In accordance with this view, the account in the Acts would not refer to the mode of Judas's death, but to the consequences of it only, which hardly agrees with the context. Others think that Judas strangled himself and at the same time cast himself down from some lofty eminence, two acts manifestly inconsistent one with the other. It is besides to be remarked that the expression rendered in our (French) versions, "having cast himself down," (Acts i., 18, "*s' étant précipité*") means simply, having fallen down on his face. In a word, the account in the Acts does not at all indicate an act of suicide, and by the very fact of not so indicating it, excludes the idea. It would be besides curious, if in narrating the same fact Matthew and Luke should have so exactly divided between them the different circumstances of the event, that there should not be the slightest point of contact in the two accounts.

XIV. The examination of parallel passages in the three first gospels suffices to prove that discourses are sometimes very freely reported in the New Testament. The passage in Acts i., 18, 19, shows that this liberty sometimes extends so far as to create words which never were pronounced. It is clear that Peter did not narrate in a circumstantial manner facts which he says himself were well known to all. Besides this name of Aceldama, given to the field of Judas, could not

have become general at the time when Peter was speaking, and have received, as it were, the confirmation of common use. Again, Peter, who was speaking Aramaean, could not say of the inhabitants of Jerusalem that Aceldama is a word of *their* proper tongue, seeing that it was his also: and especially he could not translate this word into Greek in the middle of an Aramaean speech. Luke has forgotten therefore that he was introducing Peter as speaking, and has spoken in his own person, and from his own point of view, as a Greek writer. It would be a vain escape to take the two verses in question as a parenthesis of Luke's own: the context opposes such an idea as this.

XV. The address of Stephen, in the 7th chapter of the Acts, contains a considerable number of difficulties, some of which have been elsewhere remarked. The 16th verse in particular has been noticed in a preceding article as an example of the influence of tradition. It is more remarkable still in other respects. According to this passage, Jacob and his sons, the patriarchs, were buried at Sychem: this may have been the case with the patriarchs, but not with Jacob, who was buried at Machpelah (Gen. l., 13). Further, Stephen attributes to Abraham the purchase of the field of Emmor of Sychem, and places a burial place there. There is here a confusion of facts. It was at Machpelah, near Hebron, and of a man named Ephron, that Abraham bought a field in which was a cavern that served him for a burial place (Gen. xxiii.), whilst Jacob bought a field at Sychem, of the sons of Emmor, a field which was originally not at all intended as a place of sepulture, although Joseph was afterwards buried there. (Gen. xxxiii. 19) Calvin frankly acknowledges this last error. It may be said perhaps, that Stephen was not inspired, that he might be mistaken, and that the inspiration of Luke consists precisely in relating facts as they occurred.

It may be cause of astonishment that this outlet has not been already made use of by the orthodox. It is right however to add that it could not be of much use to them, after it has been shown that the sacred writers do not report discourses literally. There was nothing to prevent Luke from correcting Stephen, and hence we are compelled to make him responsible for the mistakes which he has allowed to remain.

XVI. Luke makes Gamaliel commit a rather serious mistake in Acts v. 36. Gamaliel is made to remind the Sanhedrim of two insurrectionary movements, the one headed by Theudas, the other by Judas of Galilee. This latter name is known to Josephus, whose account is reconcileable with that in the Acts. It is not so with the former. According to Luke, Theudas appeared before Judas (v. 37), got together a company of about four hundred men, and was slain. Josephus also speaks of a Theudas, a magician, who professing to be a prophet, imposed upon a considerable number of persons, led them to the Jordan, where he promised to divide the waters, but was attacked by a party of horsemen sent after him by the Roman governor; his partisans were slain or taken prisoners, and he himself brought to Jerusalem, where he was put to death. There is evidently sufficient resemblance between these two accounts to make it clear that they refer to one and the same event; they only differ in respect of the number of adherents who joined Theudas. But this very resemblance is the best proof of Luke's mistake; the fact of which Josephus speaks having taken place in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, under the government of the procurator Cuspius Fadus, that is to say not only after Judas the Galilean, but about a dozen of years after the time when Gamaliel was speaking. To justify Luke, we must either assume that Josephus was mistaken, which is the less probable as he gives the date of the event, without insisting upon the

fact, that, in a matter of Jewish history, the authority of Luke can be by no means so good as his : or we must suppose that there were two Theudas, both false prophets ("boasting themselves to be somebody," Luke), both leaders of insurrectionary movements, and who both suffered a violent death. This is one of those improbabilities which are practically impossibilities.

XVII. Paul in Acts xiii. 20, assigns to the period of the Judges a duration of 450 years, which is much too long. According to 1 Kings vi. 1, there were only 480 years between the Exodus and the building of the temple. Now from these 480 years take forty years for the journey through the desert, at least nineteen years for the government of Joshua, forty years for the reign of Saul, (v. 21), forty years for that of David, and four for that of Solomon up to the building of the temple, in all 141 years, and there remain only 336 years instead of 450. If the chronology of Paul is not however in agreement with that of the Old Testament, it coincides with that of Josephus.

XVIII. The epistles of the New Testament, especially those of Paul, present fewer errors of fact than errors of citation and of interpretation, of which we have already spoken. We shall content ourselves here with giving an example of an error of memory. Paul speaks of 23,000 Israelites who perished in a single day, in consequence of their participation in the impure worship of the Moabites (1 Cor. x. 1). The text of the Old Testament has 24,000, a number which is also found in the Septuagint, Josephus, Philo, and the Rabbis, (Num. xxv. 9)

XIX. We have elsewhere spoken of the error in the epistle to the Hebrews (xix. 4), referring to the contents of the ark of the covenant, an error which appears to be derived from a tradition of the Rabbis. There is another in the same

chapter (v. 2, 4) which rests simply on a mistake. The author only places the golden candlestick and the table of the shewbread in the sanctuary (v. 2), and puts the golden censer in the Holy of Holies (v. 4). But this latter object was with the other two in the sanctuary, as is proved by the following passages: Exod. xxx. 6, xl. 26; Levit. xvi. 12; 1 Kings vi. 22, vii. 48, 49; 2 Chron. iv 19, 20). It is however easy to perceive in these passages themselves the circumstances which led the writer into the error he committed.

XX. We have noticed also the influences of tradition in the eleventh chapter of the same epistle. There are in this chapter other errors which appear to have their origin solely in the writer's own mind, and in the course of argument which he is adopting.

It is thus that he transforms into faith the obedience of Abraham ready to sacrifice his son, and arbitrarily determines the nature of this faith by saying that Abraham expected the resurrection of Isaac (xi. 19.) It is thus also that in express contradiction to the Old Testament (Gen. xviii. 10, seq.) he attributes the conception of Sarah to the faith which she had in the declaration of God (xi. 11).

XXI. I come now to a question which affects the gospels and which extends also to the other writings of the New Testament; the expectation of the second coming of Christ.

The Saviour himself often alludes to this point. When he gives his first instructions to the apostles, he declares to them that they shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come, (Matt. x. 23.) On another occasion, after having received the testimony of Peter, he begins to show to his disciples the event with which his ministry was to conclude; but he announces to them at the same time that the Son of Man should return in the glory of his Father, and he adds, " Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing

here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom," (Matt. xvi. 28.) The passage Matt. xxiii. 39, also refers to the return of Christ, but does not speak, as the two preceding ones do, of the proximity of this event. But it is exactly to this latter point that we wish to direct attention.

Besides these passing allusions, the evangelists have preserved a somewhat lengthened discourse of Jesus Christ upon the destruction of Jerusalem, the second coming of the Son of Man, and the end of the world. This discourse, by much the most complete in Matthew, (xxiv., xxv.), is found also in all its essential points in the 13th chapter of Mark and in the 16th of Luke. As to the Gospel of John, the second coming of Christ is represented there as a spiritual coming, and if the idea of a historical and visible return is not excluded, if even it may be referred to here and there, it is certain that it is not expressed, still less emphasised, (comp. especially the 14th chapter.) Let us first consider the text of Matthew, and then compare this text with the accounts in the second and third Gospels.

The Jews expected a period of trial as the one immediately to precede the great deliverance; this period of suffering is referred to in the expression, *the beginning of sorrows*, (Matt. xxiv. 8. "*douleurs de l'enfantement du Messie*"), because the coming of the Messiah and the re-establishment of the Theocracy were to succeed to these sufferings, and in a certain sense to proceed from them. It is not certain, as has often been asserted, that the destruction of the temple and of the city was considered as the culminating point of this painful crisis. This opinion, of which the Talmud bears some traces, was perhaps connected with later Rabbinism. This popular idea is not however necessary to explain the question of the apostles to Jesus, Matt. xxiv. 3. Though they recognised

Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, they had by no means abandoned the idea which had grown up among the Jews, based upon the prophetic declarations; they only referred to a second coming of Christ all that they had expected at first from the first and only coming, and moreover, they expected this second coming as something about to take place immediately (Acts i. 6). Hence it is, that when they heard the words of the Saviour concerning the destruction of the temple, they supposed immediately that they referred to his second coming in glory.

Jesus, in his answer, leaves at first on one side the question of the time; he answers that part later, generally, and on the whole negatively (32—36, Acts i. 7). As to the other portion of the question, as to the signs of his coming, he answers it immediately and directly, connecting together that which was also connected in the thoughts of the apostles, the destruction of Jerusalem, and his coming (4—31). This answer is very distinctly divided into three portions. In the first he indicates the calamities which, without belonging to the event itself, are to be regarded as the precursors of it (4—14). In the second he speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem (15—28). In the third he announces and describes the second coming of the Son of Man, and the end of the world (29—31). In these three parts, in accordance with the question of the apostles, it is rather the signs of the events than the events themselves, which are the object of the statements of the Lord.

The division of the discourse, as we have just indicated it, is so clearly shown in the text, the three epochs or periods are so clearly distinguished, that it is impossible not to recognise them. Unfortunately it is exactly on this distinction that the difficulties are based which we have now to notice.

In the first place, among the afflictions announced to precede the fall of Jerusalem, (4—14) there are some which

did not occur previous to that event. There were persecutions on the part of the Jews and of the Gentiles, especially that of Nero, (v. 9). It may even be allowed that the Gospel had been preached to all the nations of the earth, if this expression is understood of the Roman Empire alone, and then not too far pressed, (v. 14.) But as to false Messiahs (v. 5), general wars, and other remarkable calamities, (v. 7.), history records nothing at all resembling them,

In the second place, in conformity with v. 14, which includes in *the end* the two events of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the second coming of Christ, v. 29 declares that the latter event shall take place immediately after the former, and as if to reduce to despair all interpreters who might seek to elude the force of this expression, v. 34 adds, "verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till *all these things* be fulfilled." Let us add to these passages the two analogous declarations of Christ already quoted, (Matt. x. 23 and xvi. 28) and then say if it be possible to escape the conviction that Jesus Christ, (except there be some error of the evangelist, or of the traditions followed by the evangelist) predicted the end of the world as about to follow immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem, and to happen before the end of the generation to whom he was addressing himself.

It is interesting to compare here the accounts of Mark and Luke. They have no parallel passage to Matt. x., 23. As to Matt. xvi., 25, they have the same words in the same context, but with a very remarkable modification (Mark ix., 1; Luke ix., 27). Instead of the personal return of Christ, they have the idea of a coming of the kingdom of God, doubtless a synonymous expression in reference to Messianic hopes, but one which is more readily susceptible of a spiritual interpretation. As to the discourse reported in the 24th chapter of Matthew, Mark and Luke differ from this evangelist, and

differ in a very significant manner as regards the question of the apostles. Both have the declaration "that this generation shall not pass away till these things shall happen" (Mark xiii., 30; Luke xxi., 32); but they have neither of them the *immediately after* of Matthew, which leaves no interval between the destruction of Jerusalem and the signs of the second coming of Christ. Mark (xiii., 24) makes use of a very vague phrase, "in those days, after that tribulation." Luke places between the two events a period of undetermined duration; "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (xxi., 24.) It has been concluded, with much probability, from the difference between the first gospel and the two others, that the author of the first account wrote before the fall of Jerusalem, whilst Mark and Luke wrote after that event. It seems equally natural to conclude from Mark ix., 1, and Luke ix., 27, and especially from Mark xiii., 30, and Luke xxi., 32, that both wrote before the end of the generation which had seen Jesus Christ, and consequently but a short time after the expedition of the Romans (compare specially the vagueness of Matt. xxiv., 15, with the preciseness of Luke xix., 43.)

However this be, we cannot for the present escape from the following result; Jesus Christ, especially according to the account of Matthew, announced his second coming as an event about to take place at a time very closely approaching: of two things, therefore, one: either the evangelists have faithfully reported the words of the Lord, and then he himself committed the error; or the Lord did not mistake, and the error is entirely that of the evangelists. We shall have to return to this question by-and-bye. (*v. Rev. de Théol.*, ii., p. 67, sqq.; vi., p. 47, sqq.)

XXII. The result at which we have arrived in respect to the teaching of Jesus, is very closely connected with another

result of the study of the New Testament. The apostles and the Christians of their time, expected the second coming of the Lord as an event soon to happen; they did not regard the speedy return of Christ as merely possible, but as certain, and it may be said that there is not a passage in the New Testament which asserts, or which even supposes, the possibility of the duration of the Church and of the world in its actual condition for more than one or two generations. The second epistle of Peter is the only exception, and this epistle is not genuine. This expectation continued to hold a prominent place in the faith and in the life of Christians up to about the end of the second century. Traces of it are found in Barnabas, in Papias, in Justin, in Irenaeus and the Montanists. It disappeared only by degrees from the Church, as time passed on, and in its passage dissipated these unfounded hopes. We know how many times this expectation has been revived in the course of centuries, and even in our own day.

This belief in the proximate return of Christ was such a main article of faith in the apostolic times, that it is found expressed, remarkably enough, in the writings of every one of the authors of the New Testament. Thus Paul, in I. Thess. iii., 13; iv., 15; (comp. II. Thess. ii., 1—12); I. Cor. x., 11; xv., 51; Phil. iv., 5; the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, x., 25; Peter, in the first epistle, iv., 7; James, in v., 9; John, in his first epistle, ii., 18, 28; Jude, in the 21st verse; the Apocalypse, from one end to the other, especially i., 1—3; iii., 11; xxii., 7—10; 12, 20. The second Epistle of Peter betrays its later date precisely by the manner in which this expectation is there spoken of (iii. 4).

We confine ourselves at present to a notice of a few of the most decisive of these passages. When the bearing of some of them has been once determined, the sense of the remainder is naturally determined also.

In I. Thess. iv., 13, v., 10, Paul is re-assuring his readers in reference to the lot of those Christians who are already dead, declaring that they also shall share in Christ's kingdom at his second coming.—“ We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (take precedence of) them which are asleep.” (iv. 15.) It is easily seen by this *we*, that Paul expected to be of the number of those who should survive at the period of which he speaks, and it is of no use to give to this pronoun a communicative sense, since even if it does not apply to Paul personally, it certainly applies to the great majority of those whom he addressed, the generation of Christians then living. A little farther on, (v. 2), Paul reminds them, it is true, that the day of the Lord cometh like a thief in the night; but this expression only means that the event itself will be sudden or unexpected; it by no means implies that the general proximity of the occurrence is matter of uncertainty either to the apostle or to his readers. We say the same thing of the passage 2 Thess. ii. 1—12. The Christians of Thessalonica, in the expectation of the immediate return of Christ, were living in a state of agitation easily comprehended. The apostle does not argue against this expectation in reference to the approaching second coming, which would be in contradiction to his first epistle, but simply against the expectation that this return should be immediate, (v. 2.) He reminds them that other events are to precede this coming, the end of the fourth monarchy and the appearance of Antichrist; but everything proves that he regarded the event itself as very near.

We find the same idea again in 1 Cor. x. 11, where Paul speaks of the Christians of his time as those on whom the ends of the world are come. The two comings of the Lord were to follow closely one upon the other, and the second was to bring the consummation of all things. The passage 1 Cor. xv. 51,

contains the same employment of the first personal pronoun as 1 Thess. iv. 15, and necessarily refers to the generation among whom the apostle lived.

What can we say finally of such passages as the following,—"But the end of all things is at hand" (1 Peter iv. 7)—"for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh"—(James v. 8)—"Little children, it is the last time" (1 John ii. 18). Ebrard, who endeavours to escape all the other passages, cannot get rid of these; he recognises in them a false conjecture of the apostles, (*Adversus erroneam nonnullorum opinionem, etc., Erlangen* 1842, p.p. 42—44, 47).

To resume these arguments: the discourses of Jesus, as they are preserved to us by the three first evangelists, announce the return of the Messiah as near at hand, and the writings of the apostles prove that the early church firmly believed in this proximate return. It is clear that these two facts stand in some sort of relation the one to the other, and therefore all explanations must be regarded as unsatisfactory which bear only upon the one or the other, much more all such explanations as either in the gospels, or the epistles, deal simply with detached passages, instead of furnishing a key adapted to all passages of a similar nature. This objection applies particularly to the criticisms which have been made use of in reference to Matt. xxiv. And besides, apart from this objection, what an exegetic scandal is the history of the interpretation of this chapter. Some only find there the destruction of Jerusalem; others only find the second coming of the Messiah. The latter interpret by way of allegory, and, for example, understand by the darkening of the sun and the falling of the stars, the downfall of paganism: the former propose a fresh division of the discourse. The greater number turn their attention especially to the difficult words in this chapter, translating *εὐθὺς* in v. 29 by *suddenly* instead of *immediately*;

γενεα in v. 34, by *race* instead of *generation*: or in this last verse understanding *all these things* of the signs of the fall of Jerusalem, of which Jesus is made again to speak. It is with these explanations as with Pharaoh's lean kine: they swallow up one another, without being any the better for it themselves.

The attempts at a general solution of the question applied to the exegetical problem are not more satisfactory. To consider with Hengstenberg that the fall of Jerusalem is the exact type of the end of the world, in such manner that each of these two events at the same time represents the other, is to introduce into the text an idea not only not indicated there, but manifestly inconsistent with its general tenor. To have recourse with Olshausen to the conditions of prophetic perspective, is to confess, at last, that Jesus Christ was mistaken in laying down chronological data unsuitable to prophecy.

XXIII. The exercise of the gift of tongues had given rise to great abuses in the church of Corinth. Paul gives directions in reference to this gift which enable us partially to understand the nature of the phenomenon. It is usually spoken of as consisting of a knowledge of foreign languages to him in the person speaking, communicated to him in some supernatural manner.

The data which the first epistle to the Corinthians furnishes, reject this notion in the most formal manner. (It is to be observed, that for the proper comprehension of what follows, the original Greek must be consulted. The versions render the meaning of the original text very imperfectly.) The employment of the singular, and the absence of any adjective in the expression *γλώσση λαλεῖν* (xiv. 2, 4) do not admit of our understanding them as used of a foreign language. The assertion contained in xiv., 2, would indeed be absolutely false, if it were here a question of a foreign language, since

there might be persons present who could speak and understand it. Elsewhere, (xiv., 6) speaking with tongues is opposed to prophetic discourse and to teaching; but teaching and prophecy are not opposed to the use of foreign languages; they might on the contrary be very well expressed in these languages. Further on (xiv., 10, 11) the phenomenon is compared with unknown languages, and consequently cannot be one and the same thing with them. Further on again (xiv., 14.) the gift of tongues is characterised as being exercised in spirit, and is opposed not to words spoken in a known language, but to words accompanied by understanding. According to xiv., 27, it was necessary that another member of the Church should interpret what was spoken with tongues: but a man who speaks in a foreign language can always understand what he says, and can always interpret it himself in any other language which he also knows. In general, in all this discussion, Paul would have taken quite different ground if he had been speaking of the use of foreign languages; he would naturally have insisted on the fact of the presence or absence of persons capable of understanding those languages, as a fact of importance in determining whether they should be employed or not.

Let us remember, besides, that the power of speaking foreign languages could have been of little use at a time when Greek and Latin served as the universal means of communication. We find no accounts either in the New Testament, or in Christian antiquity, moreover, that the apostles or other Christians ever employed this power in the evangelisation of the world. And lastly can it be admitted that the neophytes, of whom we hear in the book of Acts (x. 46, xix. 9), began all at once, and without any object, to speak in languages up to that time unknown to them?

We believe, in accordance with all these data, that the

gift of tongues must be understood to mean a discourse in extatic words, in a language created expressly for the purpose, without any known sense, and simply as an arbitrary expression of sentiments inexpressible by words.

According to 1 Cor. xiv. 13—17, the subjects of this kind of expression were prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, that is to say, exactly those spiritual exercises in which the understanding has the least place, and where feeling or sentiment reigns. Thus the gift of tongues is spoken of in connection with prophecy, (Acts xix. 6; 1 Cor. xiv. 1, sqq.) as something analogous to this gift. It is also represented as an extatic gift during the first ages of the Church: Origen is the first who speaks of it otherwise. Finally the gift of tongues, as manifested among the Irvingites in 1831, has a most striking analogy with the phenomenon we have been describing, and confirms, in a remarkable manner, the exegetic results already acquired before that period.

As to the account in the book of Acts, on the other hand, (Acts ii.) it is impossible not to perceive that there foreign languages properly so called are spoken of (v. 5—11). At the same time, even this account bears traces of a tradition more conformable to the testimony of Paul on the subject. Thus we see (v. 4) that the disciples begin to speak with tongues before there is any person present to hear them; thus they are accused of drunkenness, (v. 13), which can only be understood of some form of enthusiasm, not necessarily connected with the mere use of a newly acquired language; thus Peter quotes a prophecy (v. 17, 18) which supposes a phenomenon entirely different from that which Luke appears to have understood by this gift. In a word, the author of the Book of Acts, or of the tradition which Luke has incorporated into his narrative, has given a fictitious development to facts, of the true nature of which he was ignorant, probably because

he himself had never been personally present on any occasion when the gift of tongues was manifested.

XXIV. We shall conclude this catalogue with the Apocalypse, and here it is the whole book which is open to objection. This work, the enigmatic appearance of which has given rise to so many different interpretations, and the mystery of which has so generally appeared to be impenetrable, has at length yielded up its secret to the rigorous method of historical interpretation. It may be said that the veil has been removed, and that the results of science are as certain as they are unexpected.

The author wrote immediately after the death of Nero, during the short reign of Galba. The persecution of the Christians by Nero, the first attack of the kind, which the Church had had to endure, had hardly ceased; it was needful to reanimate the faith of the disciples, to awaken their hopes, to strengthen their constancy, and it is for these purposes that John takes up the pen. Pagan Rome, identified with the persecuting emperor, seems to him to be the prophesied Antichrist. Basing his theory upon the prophecies of the Old Testament, especially those of Daniel, to which he gives as it were a commentary and a continuation, expanding and developing the elements of the hopes of both Jews and Christians, he announces the coming of Antichrist in the return of Nero, the temporary occupation of Jerusalem by this hostile power, the defeat of the oppressor, the fall of Rome and the Millennium. John expects the accomplishment of these events within a very short period, forty-two months, or three years and an half.

We believe it useless to enter upon the proofs of an explanation which the labours of Ewald, Lücke, Reuss, and De Wette, have demonstrated to be the correct one. But if we admit this interpretation, what are the consequences? On the

one hand we find in the work a symmetry so ingenious, so learned and so refined, as absolutely to exclude the reality of the visions presented to us in such a form : the order and the connection of these visions are a work of reflection, a production of art, and not a mere relation of a real and objective fact. We must say the same of the style of the writer, which presents on attentive study, a very skillful but at the same time artificial and laboured cento of phrases, images and whole passages taken from the prophecies of the Old Testament. On the other hand, and this is even more decisive, the Apocalypse contains a prediction which was never accomplished. Nero was not Antichrist, he did not return with the kings of the east, the three years and a half assigned to the sufferings of the Church passed over without bringing about the last catastrophe, and centuries have since passed without bringing it about either. In a word, the author of the Apocalypse was not the revealer of the secrets of the Most High, but the organ of the fears and of the hopes of the Church, the minister of the exhortations which it needed, and the echo of the superstitious prejudices of the time.

We have found a very considerable number of errors in the Bible. We have consented to limit the field of our observation to the New Testament, and there in the narratives, in the epistles and in the predictions, we have discovered phenomena, which the theopneustic theory cannot account for. Among the objections against which the dogmatic idea which we are criticising is shattered into a thousand fragments we find the use of the version of the Seventy, quotations from the Old Testament in a sense not admitted by the original, the influence of Jewish tradition, Rabbinical arguments, uncertainty in the reports of the discourses of the Saviour, implicit

and explicit contradictions between different accounts of the same fact, faults of chronology and of history, Messianic hopes and expectations not in accordance with external events. We have not endeavoured to exhaust the subject, nor have we been able to enter upon discussions which might have been here and there necessary to establish in all their force the exegetic results at which we have arrived. Those who are acquainted with the subject, know what is the present position of the questions we have touched upon, and the refutation of opinions different from ours would have appeared very obscure to those who are not acquainted with the subject. What is certain is this, that of the numerous objections which we have pointed out, any single one, we repeat, any one singly is enough to overthrow all the edifice of orthodoxy. It is enough that Matthew should have written Jeremiah for Zechariah, that Mark should have Abiathar instead of Ahimelech: it is enough that one thread should give way, and the whole artificial fabric of dogmatic demonstration must tear from end to end.

At the same time we in no sense deceive ourselves. Of all the difficulties we have raised, there is not one which has not been attempted to be explained away, or in which the partisans of plenary inspiration have definitely recognised a difficulty. Not that impartial exegesis has made no conquests, that science has obtained no concessions, that certain doubts have not entered into some souls, and certain arguments been more or less modified; but that, looking at religious literature from a general point of view, it may be said that théopneustie has not yielded a single inch of ground, that the most enlightened of its supporters rather have avowals extorted from them than confess a truth, and that the most zealous or the most ignorant defenders of the commonly received dogma can always, in case of need, give two or three answers for one, and

can maintain very tolerably their advantage in the eyes of all those (and they are by far the greater number) who count reasons instead of weighing them.

There are then, and there will be to the end of the world, resources available to this defeated orthodox belief. Critical researches have this peculiarity, that it is difficult to deduce from them evidence sufficiently strong to shut all mouths, light so clear as to be palpable to all eyes. And yet we must venture on one remark on this point. Is there always complete sincerity in the subtleties, the windings, the conjectures, the arbitrary comparisons, the artificial deductions, which the defenders of (plenary) inspiration are obliged to have recourse to, in order to attain their object? Are they never troubled in their consciences when they propose to others an explanation, of which they themselves know the weakness, if not the falsity? Do they never internally lament the obligation which they have imposed upon themselves to justify every word and every letter? Do they not often leave their own demonstration, less convinced than they were before? Is not the force of these scruples of conscience in exact proportion to the extent of the knowledge, the depth of the study, and the critical skill of him who endeavours to reconcile the evidence of facts with the requirements of the system? Are there not at least times in the lives of these men, in which their whole position in respect to the Gospel and human knowledge, appears singularly false? Does not this question of Inspiration become to them one of constant anxiety, does it not form as it were a diseased point in the body of their belief, do they not feel with uneasiness that doubt is transmitted from it even to the other points of their faith, that because of this dogma alone their piety is wanting in simplicity, in unity, in joy, and that they have no remedy but in the efforts of their minds not to think more of it, and in the activity of their lives which enables

them to forget a question too threatening to be boldly and fairly met? And finally, if this sincerity is now complete, if the art of taking for granted has now become a habit, if, fortunately, the belief of which we are speaking is a true and real belief, was not at first at any rate a severe wrench given to the natural feeling for truth?

And this leads us to a second reflection. This obstinate endeavour to explain away anything in the Bible which bears the least trace of an error, and to make this Bible an infallible authority in matters of history, of geography, and of chronology, as well as of religion, these endeavours must necessarily have a dogmatic point of departure. You do not admit that there are any errors in Scripture, but it is because you consider Scripture to be inspired. Your belief in this inspiration does not proceed from any examination of the book, and from the solution of the difficulties which it presents: it is anterior to this examination, the method and limits of which it determines. If you apply to the criticism of the New Testament an *à priori* process of apology which you do not apply to any other book, it must be because the New Testament is to you in advance a book different from every other book. In short, you proceed manifestly on the principle that you must find at any price a mode of reconciling contradictions, a plan of explaining away errors. Evidently you have some motive for acting thus, and this motive is an article of faith, a fact which appears to you already ascertained: and this fact which regulates your exegesis, this article of faith which appears to you more sacred than the results of criticism appear evident to you, is inspiration itself.

In other words you refuse to recognise errors in the Bible, because the Bible is infallible! The reasoning in a circle is already clear. Is it in vain that you say that there is here one of those apparent contradictions in which two truths

appear to us equally certain, though we are unable to reconcile them. In vain that you cite as a parallel case those *antinomies*, which can only be resolved by sacrificing some necessary or sacred truths. In vain you pretend that appearances opposed to the theopneustic theory are counterbalanced by other considerations and other proofs, such as the assertions of the Saviour and his apostles, the constant faith of the Church, the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit. There is here no *antinomy*, because there are not two contradictory truths, but a single fact to be established, namely, the infallibility of the Bible. This fact cannot be at the same time true and false, be and not be at the same moment, and therefore a single certain error in the Bible is enough to overthrow all testimony, all considerations which tend to establish the impossibility of finding such an error. It is the case of the man before whom the possibility of motion was denied, and who broke down the learned demonstration by rising from his chair.

It cannot be too often repeated that at the bottom of all discussions by the defenders of inspiration, we find a profound ignorance of the nature of critical facts. They do not believe in facts, they question the value of their evidence, because they have not been accustomed to stand upon the ground of historical exegesis. But the more study becomes strong, and extends its influence, the more will the love of truth become developed, and will reduce to their real value the abstractions of a superannuated dogmatism.

WHAT THE BIBLE IS.

BY EDMUND SCHERER.

We have said much of what the Bible is not, and in our struggle with superstition, ignorance, and dogmatic assumption we shall in all probability have to say much more. We are far from sharing some people's fear of negations. There is a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted, a time to destroy and a time to build. It is a great mistake to believe that truth can be established by a predication simply positive. Nothing but the antagonism in which a dogma is placed in respect to that which is not it, can explain its true sense, and give it its complete and real bearing. And if this attitude were not polemical, the majority of mankind would take this side without comprehending its real object and scope.

On the other hand, nothing is so barren of results as a criticism which finds its end in itself, nothing so childish as a disposition to destroy for the pleasure of making ruins. Besides this it is with ideas which bear upon the Bible as with all traditional dogmas; these dogmas are never absolutely false: that which has formed a portion of the faith of the church for centuries, which has strengthened the Chris-

tian in temptation, which has consoled him in trial, which has brought peace to his heart, can never have been merely a mockery. Besides a form, now old, there is a substance durable, nay eternal. It is thus that Christianity preserves its essential identity in the midst of all the changes which result to it from the developments of human thought. It is thus that it is at one and the same time always the same and always new. The duty of religious science consists precisely in reconciling revelation with the growing requirements of human thought, in smoothing over the transition from the dogma of the past to that of the future, and dogmatic exegesis accomplishes this task and fulfils this duty by separating the substance from the form, and the faith from the formulas of belief, by distinguishing and pointing out the religious element under the temporary expression which reveals it. Such is the task we propose to ourselves in respect to the Holy Scriptures of Christians.

Let us first notice the defects of the orthodox notion : we shall thus at the same time indicate the conditions of a theory more conformable to the nature of things.

Traditional theology is in this position. The need of authority has brought it to a special idea of inspiration, according to which the sacred writings constitute a written revelation, and present a divine and infallible text. On the other hand, the power of habit, respect for any '*fait accompli*,' this other form of the necessity for authority, has induced the theology of which we speak to receive the collection of sacred books as it is bequeathed to us by the church of the first two centuries. The orthodox faith in Scripture rests then upon two bases, inspiration and the canon of Scripture, or in other words, on the nature of inspiration, and on the subjects or organs of this

inspiration. Orthodoxy believes that inspiration is a theography (a writing with the finger of God), and that the inspired books are the biblical books, all the biblical books, and the biblical books alone.

The arguments employed by the defenders of this traditional dogmatism, the theories advanced to justify the holy collection of books and the authority attributed to this collection, must therefore be applicable to the two bases spoken of above : these theories must prove the reality of inspiration in the sense spoken of, and they must be capable of being adapted to all the authors and to all the writings in the biblical collection.

But exactly the reverse has happened, As the theographic notion of inspiration is not a historical reality, but merely the requirement of a necessity in itself false and unsound, as the canonical collection was originally formed on principles of criticism now abandoned, there is no system ingenious enough to apply to all the writings of this sacred collection, or prove the reality of the supernatural character attributed to these writings. Facts always overlap upon one side or other the dogma in which it is desirable to frame them, and the only means of arriving at the truth is to take these facts as our point of departure.

The two elements of the biblical idea, as we have just said are inspiration and the Canon. The one relates to the internal and religious character of the sacred writings, the other to the determination of these writings or the external limitation of the collection which contains them. To reduce this collection to unity of idea we may proceed from the contents to the containing form, or on the contrary, from the containing form to the contents, from that which is external to that which

is internal. If we adopt the former of these modes, our task is to determine inspiration, after which the Canon will be formed naturally of all such books as shall appear to participate in this inspiration thus determined. If on the contrary, we proceed from the external, and decide upon determining which are the inspired books in accordance with some independent criterion of subjective and individual appreciation, this criterion must be sought for in some fact externally appreciable, such for example, as the apostolic origin of the New Testament.

We believe for our own part, that both these methods should be used in turn, and should serve as a check upon one another. At the same time, inspiration is, so to speak, the fact nearest to us, because it is a fact of immediate and personal experience. Let us begin therefore with this.

The stand-point of authority has spoiled everything in our theology. It has been deemed advisable to determine for us *à priori* what we ought to believe, what we ought to feel, what we ought to respect and love: it has been considered desirable to settle in advance, and by processes necessarily external to us, by criteria necessarily material, what Jesus and his words, what the disciples and their writings ought to be to us. The human conscience has been ignored, and the testimony which it bears to the truth of God, when this truth comes in contact with it, has been distrusted, and thus we have had made for us an empty and dead theology.

There is only one way of recognising the divine, and that is by experiencing it. The case with orthodox arguments on the subject of Scripture is precisely the same as with the proofs of the existence of God: they prove nothing except to those who believe already by personal experience. Leave on

one side, once for all, demonstrations always more or less illusory, and let the Bible itself speak for itself and plead its own cause. Instead of taking pains to place the reader under the influence of your dogmatic ideas, encourage him to approach the Scriptures for himself without the interference of anything taken for granted. Do not hinder him from reading it as he would read any other book. Have confidence in the power of the spirit. Beware of attributing to your dogmas an influence which the sacred volume would not have of itself. If the Bible says nothing to the heart, be you sure that your systems in reference to the Bible will not be more efficacious. All your arguments taken from prophecies and miracles, your reasonings in a circle which pretend by texts to establish the authority of other texts, will never persuade a man to submit to words which do not speak to his soul. And even if he did submit, what would be the value of such a submission?

The apologists of authority contradict themselves. Hundreds of times they have told us of the peculiar virtue of Holy Writ, of the effect which it produces, of the witness of the spirit which accompanies the study and the reading of it. The power which the Bible possesses of justifying itself to the conscience of men may even be called a Protestant dogma. And let us add, never was dogma better founded. How many times has Scripture reproved the mocker in his soul, or arrested the worldling in his vicious course! With what power it accuses the hardened sinner! With what mildness it raises up the penitent sinner! Towards what a vast horizon of hope does it direct the looks of the despairing! At one time it is like the lightning flash darting into our souls, and revealing us as we are to ourselves, as the fire from heaven lights up during the night the plains over which it bursts! At another like the sword that transfixes us with its irresistible impulse

and penetrates the lowest depths of our spiritual being ! At another, a healing balm, calming the piercing wounds of pride ! It is the blessed voice of pardon we have there, the voice of a God calling himself our Father, the voice of a love deeper than hell, and stronger than death. It is our ideal which appears to us, the ideal of the sublime and the gentle, of the majestic and of the tender, the ideal of a life of holiness, which fills the heart in turns with confusion and with joy. I open Genesis, and I find in the mysterious yet naïve recital of the first transgression, the history of all temptations and of all falls. I take the Psalter, and my remorse, my aspirations, my gratitude, all find expression there. I take the Prophets, and I have there God, who disdains sacrifices, and who is pleased to dwell in humble and contrite hearts. Further on appears the Preacher of Nazareth. He speaks of him without whose will not even a sparrow falls to the ground ; he declares blessed the cast down and afflicted ; he promises peace of soul to those who come to him ; and each of his words leaves as it were a track of light in the abysses of my heart, and in the mysteries of my existence. And behind the Son of Man advance his disciples. One proclaims the riches of the love of Christ, and declares to us that the cross is his glory, suffering his privilege, and death his hope. Another speaks to us of the life which has been made manifest, and of the Saviour who showed himself to the world, full of grace and truth. The impression produced by all these words is not an idea, it is a fact. This light cast upon the dark places of the heart is a fact ; this involuntary confusion, these aspirations towards goodness and towards God, this tender respect for Jesus, this shame for the past, this desire for good, this thirst after eternal life—all these are facts, and the power which produces these effects is a fact too. The words which lead us so irresistibly to God, can only come from him. It is his spirit

which, when we read these pages, communes with our spirits. The men who spoke thus were assuredly filled with power from on high, and it is with good right and justly that their writings have been regarded as inspired.

Such is inspiration. It is a manifestation in words of the spirit of holiness which Jesus announced to his own, and which he introduced into the world. We feel this spirit in the Scriptures: their truth is one with their power and their effect; our heart thrills under this influence; they bear with them their right and their title to our regard; they no more require any testimony to the heart, than does the ray of light to the eye, or the edge of the sword to the bosom which it pierces. We have heard, we have seen, we have touched the eternal word. Proofs of the divinity of the word are not only superfluous in a case like this, they are absurd and ridiculous.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is felt, the proof of its reality is in its effects, but various considerations confirm this datum of the feelings.

The divine life cannot manifest itself without divine knowledge, and this knowledge, though less immediately due to the breath of heaven, is yet not less one of its results. The fire with which faith burns lights up also the intelligence. Thus if we consider the first century of Christianity, we are struck with the power of speculation which accompanies it. Although the teachings of the Saviour never go beyond the sphere of the religious life, his words, like everything which modifies man in the depths of his moral life, contain within them the germ of a new conception of man himself, of the world and of God. And this is not all. Jesus, with his absolute purity, with his infinite love, with his cross at once sublime and infamous, Jesus, the ideal of humanity, the manifestation of divinity,

the healer of diseases, the powerful yet gentle saviour of souls, the revealer of a yet unknown God, that heavenly messenger, who infused eternal life into the souls of those who believed in him—Jesus must, in his own person, have become for the thought of Christendom the centre of a theology. This in fact took place, from the day after his resurrection. In respect to dogmatic formativeness we can hardly sufficiently admire the sap of the apostolic age. We find in the writings of this age a fulness of fruitful ideas, a bold combination of old speculation and of new facts, of views which take in at once the origin of humanity and its history, the problems of the creation and of evil, the agreement of the divine revelations. Jesus of Nazareth no longer remains merely the Messiah of the Jews: he becomes the eternal Logos, the first-born of creation and the second Adam. The aspirations of humanity towards God are discovered by our apostolic writers even in paganism. Judaism is brought back to its mere temporary position, the worship in spirit is proclaimed, and the Old Testament at once abolished and accomplished, is reconciled with the New by means of an interpretation as profound as new, as new as bold.

There is another consideration which ought to engage our attention for a moment. It is impossible, even when we look at the Bible in an historic, or so to speak, objective point of view, not to recognise in it a divine work. The writings of which it is composed, carry with them the remembrance of the most important events in the religious history of the world, they have served to bring about these events, they are themselves a part of them. Are not Judaism and Christianity there in their entirety? Were not the prophets of the old dispensation, whose discourses we read even to this day, truly men of God? And do not the first pastors of the Church and Jesus himself speak and live in our canonical books?

These books are then more than books, more than the written word—they present us with the living personality of those who founded God's kingdom upon earth.

We must further consult the testimony of the Church, which is only the experience of the Christian controlled and confirmed by that of his brethren of all ages. The Church is founded upon Scripture: this is a fact, and the Church cannot do without the Scripture. It is its tradition, its character, its title: more than that it is, I will not say the rule, nor the object, but the source of its faith, and consequently of its life. This fact must not be confounded with the fate of such and such a theory respecting the Bible. It is not upon these theories that the Church has lived and still lives, but upon the nourishment of the substantial word, upon the contact of its spirit with the Spirit of God in its sacred books.

Let us return to the spontaneous judgment of faith. Continuing to enquire here, we find the notion of Scripture, or the notion of inspiration become clearer as it becomes more limited. It is true that the believer recognises the Spirit of God in the Bible; but it is also true that he does not recognise it everywhere, nor everywhere equally, and that he recognises it elsewhere than in the pages of the canonical collection. Inspiration is a fact, but it is also a fact—and a fact furnished by the deepest experience of faith—that the spirit by which the Scriptures are vivified is not all imprisoned between the covers of that volume. The spirit of the Bible is the eternal Spirit of God, the spirit promised to all by Jesus Christ, the spirit which sustains the Church after having founded it long since, the spirit which has at all times inspired the prophets, that spirit which has always blown where it listed, which animated Augustin, St. Bernard, á Kempis,

Arndt, Vinet. To pretend to enclose the Spirit of God in the Bible, to deny the identity of the spirit of the Bible with the spirit of the holy men of all times, is an outrage upon the Spirit itself, is a lie of theology against faith. The Bible is so far from having the monopoly of inspiration, that there are non-canonical writings in which this inspiration is much more clear and distinct than in some of the biblical books.

We can say the same thing of the distinction between one part of Scripture and another. The tyranny of dogmatic theory cannot in this case stifle the sure instinct of the religious life. The believer makes, unknown to himself, perhaps even in spite of himself, a difference between the canonical authors, between the different writings of these authors, and between different portions of these writings. He feels the Spirit of God clearly, because powerfully, manifested in the greater part of the Psalms and Prophecies, he does not feel it in the same degree in the Law and in the Proverbs, he has difficulty in feeling it at all in Ecclesiastes or Solomon's Song. He reads the New Testament more than the Old, the Gospels and the Epistles more than the Acts or the Apocalypse, Paul more than James, James more than Jude. The Sermon on the Mount, the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans on the life of the Spirit, the thirteenth of the first Epistle to the Corinthians on Charity, approve themselves to his conscience as inspired words, while it is difficult to say as much of the genealogy of the twelve tribes in the Book of Chronicles, or of that of Jesus Christ in Matthew and in Luke. Inspiration is not felt, and consequently is not, in the nautical details of the voyage and shipwreck of Paul, in his commissions to Timothy, and in the salutations at the conclusion of his letter to the Romans. It is this judgment founded upon the nature of things, which expresses the distinction between the word of God and the Scripture, between the substance and

the form, between the pure religious character of the one, and the necessary mixture in the other, based upon the human conditions of every written work.

We have determined what is Inspiration, let us now see on what the Canon rests. Inspiration we have said is not limited to the Canon of Scripture. If this is so, what is the value of the Canon, and what significance has the collection of biblical books? It seems as if an exclusive privilege should be the ground of the existence of this collection, and that in the absence of this privilege, the Bible can only be an arbitrary collection of writings arbitrarily chosen from among the varied products of the Christian intellect. The objection is natural: and in the face of the fact of the constancy of inspiration in the Church, the biblical Canon must in point of fact have fallen to pieces, did not this Canon find its constituent principle and its ground of existence in some other fact no less real, and even in the nature of things. Let us turn our attention to this constituent principle of the Canon.

Each epoch produces a literature, and every great epoch produces a literature which becomes classical. A classic literature is that which, originating in a particular set of circumstances, is distinguished by richness and harmony, by truth and power, especially however by the close connection which exists between it and some great historic epoch, in such manner that this literature becomes the final and complete expression of a nationality, serves to define it by this expression, and remains for succeeding ages an ideal type of the genius of this nationality, a lasting source of inspiration, an eternal model of imitation. It is important at the same time to remark, that the perfection of a classic literature is necessarily relative, that is to say, that such a literature inevitably

becomes old, that it constantly becomes older, and that in thus becoming old, it becomes also, from many points of view, strange to the thought and to the taste of future generations who study it. The veneration with which it is continually surrounded, does not exclude the consciousness of this discordance. It is found necessary to make allowances for the time, the circumstances, the historical events, in which the literature took its rise; to place one's self, not at any absolute point of view, which can never be suitable in human affairs, but at the point of view of the epoch which it is desired to appreciate. It is in their relation to their age that the writers of any age are judged. No one thinks of reducing the horses of the Frieze of the Parthenon to our modern ideas of the picturesque. No reader demands from Homer what he expects from Shakspeare, nor exacts from Shakspeare what he would be offended at not finding in Racine, nor is dissatisfied at finding in Racine a different set of ideas and expressed in different words from those of Goethe, Lamartine, or Tennyson. The same rule holds here as in the conditions imposed on the arts by the nature of things, and tacitly accepted by every one. Phædra may speak in verse, painting is degraded when it becomes a mere optical delusion, and the most exact imitations of the human face are banished to the hair-dresser's shops, whilst there is no effort in accepting as a living man, a block of white marble carved by the sculptor, or of bronze cast by the founder.

All this is applicable to the Bible. Canonical literature is nothing else than the classic literature of Christianity. This literature appeared at the very origin of the church, because it is the peculiarity of Christianity, as a divine revelation, to have manifested itself in all its fulness at its very commencement. It is not the limit of a development, it is the principle of one, and complete from the beginning, it must also from its beginning

be a classical expression. But it is by no means to be assumed that this expression is absolute; to judge of it and its influence, we must place ourselves at the historical point of view, and consider it in its general relation to the circumstances which called it into being. The respect which we have for the Bible, the affection we bear towards it, the eagerness with which we study it, the submission with which we hear its teachings, are perfectly compatible with that unconscious and spontaneous accommodation with which the reader makes allowances in the divine work, for that which is human, temporary, imperfect.

We see therefore that the idea and the limitation of the Canon do not necessarily imply an exclusive idea of inspiration. Canonical literature finds its ground of existence and its external limitation in the facts of history, in the character of the epoch which produced it, and of which it is the enduring monument.

There is another fact which must be attended to in the constitution of the biblical idea. The inspiration of the Bible, we have seen, is not equal, but differs in the case of different authors. In order to secure for this fact the importance which belongs to it, it is necessary to consider the relation of Scripture to Christianity. Jesus Christ is the centre of Christianity, and consequently also the centre of the Bible. The Old Testament is part of the Scriptures of Christians only in the sense and in the degree that the Old Dispensation belongs to the New, namely, as a presentiment, prediction and preparation. As to the New Testament itself, its centre is clearly and visibly found in the words of Christ, as they are preserved, or, so to speak, stereotyped in the first three gospels. It is here that inspiration, by which

I understand the manifestation of the divine, is the most striking, most immediate, most original, and most inimitable. It is here also that we have the source of all other inspiration, the germ of all development, the creating word of the Church. Around this bright centre are ranged many concentric circles more or less removed from it, according as the inspiration is more or less deep and living. John first with his Gospel and his epistles; his gospel, which is less a history than a mystic commentary on the life of his beloved Master, and his epistles, which are again a commentary on his gospel, and which, like it, while they have scarcely furnished a single article to our creeds, have been no less the hidden manna for longing hearts in all nations. Then comes Paul, not less profound, doubtless, in the mysteries of the spiritual life, but with whom feeling willingly adopts the arms of argument and loses its impulsiveness by clothing itself in the garb of doctrine. Let us add that it is this impetuous reasoning, this dogmatic faith, this analysis of the ideas implicitly contained in Christianity, which have served to bring home the Gospel to the masses. Paul has been understood where John and Jesus were not, and his doctrines of the sovereign mercy and of the free grace of God have presided more than once over the revivals of the Church, bearing to the apostle a whole succession of spiritual descendants, Augustine, Luther, St. Cyran and Wesley. The last of these concentric circles across which shines this spirit of Christ, which is the spirit of God, contains the writings of various authors: the Epistle to the Hebrews, where we find, breaking through the littlenesses of rabbinical interpretations, a conception at once ingenious and majestic of Christianity in relation to the Jewish revelation: the Epistle of James, grave and serious, where we find mingled together the sententious tones of Hebrew wisdom, and the threatening accents of the ancient prophets; the first Epistle

of Peter, the resemblance of which to the writings of Paul forms a remarkable historic problem ; and the Apocalypse, in which the attachment to the letter, and the calculations of times and seasons, of which God has reserved the secret to himself, have not been able to stifle the language of evangelic faith and hope.

The peculiarity of the orthodox notion of inspiration is that it encloses the Canon within limits rigorously determined, which however the conscience of Christians does not acknowledge, and which criticism constantly tends to overthrow, at the risk of at the same time overthrowing the Canon itself. The peculiarity of an idea, at once more religious and more historical, is, on the contrary, that it leaves the limits of the Canon undetermined. The spirit which animated the age of the apostles, and which manifested itself in the literature of that age, that spirit which penetrated in different degrees the great monuments of that literature, is little to be felt in some of the books of the New Testament. If the sacred collection has its luminous centre, its rays do not entirely vanish without having a twilight, in which we can recognise at the same time its presence and its gradual decay. The extreme circle of the canon is composed of those books in which the breath of inspiration seems exhausted, whether like the Epistle of Jude, they have been admitted into the collection, or like the first Epistle of Clement, and those of Polycarp and Barnabas, they have been excluded from it by a too narrow idea of what is canonical. We know besides that the early Church distinguished between writings universally recognised and doubtful writings, and the German reformers between canonical and deutero-canonical books. As to the supposititious books, that is it say, books introduced to the Church by the name of some venerated man who was not the author of them, it is certainly not fair to judge of this fraud according to the

strictness of literary criticism in our days, but it is difficult to attribute anything but an historic interest to these feeble gleams of the genius of a great age.

The Old Testament almost arranges itself upon somewhat of a similar plan. The theocratic spirit is concentrated in the Mosaic law, the constituent revelation of Judaism; it extends with different degrees of intensity through the prophets and the Hagiographa, and casts an expiring ray upon the books known by the name of the Apocrypha of the Old Testament.

Such is the real organisation of the Canon. This organisation is neither literary nor dogmatic, it is religious; or rather Scripture is not an organisation, it forms a choir of voices, which, each in its own way, sings the praises of Him who is the Father of Jesus Christ, and our Father, the God of Jesus Christ, and our God.

And there is one final distinction to be made. We have taken inspiration (in the religious sense,) as the principle of Scripture, and inspiration in its relation to the age of the apostles as the principle of the Canon. It is far from true however that all the books of which the biblical collection is composed, justify the places which they occupy there, by the manifestation of the spirit displayed in them. The very nature of many of these books excludes up to a certain point the character of inspiration. We refer to the historical books of the Bible. The duty of the authors of these books is to say all that they know: they are mere chroniclers, often mere compilers, echoes more or less faithful of traditionary accounts. Far from complaining of this, we should rejoice at it. It is facts that it is important we should possess, and would to God that these facts were more numerous. However this be, it is remarkable to observe in how great a degree the person of the biblical historians is lost in their histories: not a word reveals them to

us, not a characteristic marks their individuality. We are often ignorant of their names, and even when we know these, we are not much further advanced, for in the most cases we are unable to identify them with any individual person. Who would dare to speak of the inspiration of the books of Samuel or of Ruth, of Kings or of Chronicles? In what passage of the the first three gospels or of the Acts do we perceive the brilliancy of the fire from on high, or even feel the throbbing of the Christian heart? When Jesus speaks in the gospels, it is the Spirit of God himself speaking, but who would dare to say as much of the text in which these discourses are contained? And this is what dogmatic theorists forget too easily.

Once more we make no reproaches in respect to biblical historiography. Far from this, the historical books of the Canon hold a most important place there. We could do without others more easily than these, for they contain the history of the divine revelations, and this history is as necessary to the Church, as the history of a nation is to its present greatness, as the recollections of a man are to his moral life. History is for nations the condition of their national conscience; sacred history is to the Christian the condition of his religious conscience. Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Ezra, John Baptist, Stephen, Paul, are links in the chain which binds earth to heaven, and without which our globe would sink into the icy solitudes of irreligion and of materialism. No! humanity cannot do without these annals in which we find living at once all the heroes of holiness and of sacrifice, and in which rises above them all, calm though bleeding, the head of the Crucified!

The Bible then is composed of two different elements, both of which however play an essential part, and which represent the two great manifestations of the spirit of holiness. The biblical annals are inspiration in action, the biblical teachings

are inspiration in words. The history of God and the word of God form together what we call Scripture ; not, as we have before said, that God speaks no more on earth, or that the history of God is finished in our day, but because the teachings and the history of the Bible are the constitutents of the Church.

We have thus finished our task. We have attempted to explain what the Bible is, that is to say to account to Christendom for its faith in the Bible ; for the existence of the Bible and faith in the Bible are facts, and theology neither makes nor unmakes facts, but merely explains them, by bringing them back to the general idea upon which they rest. It is true that in acting thus, theology attempts to bring back the fact to the law and the reality to the ideal, to purify faith by giving it a knowledge of itself. And thus theology ought not to adapt the fact to the dogmatic theory, but on the contrary deduce the latter from the former. It ought not, as it has too often done in reference to the subject which has been occupying our attention, to endeavour to impose upon history the mould of notions manufactured *à priori*, but on the contrary, to strive to express the results of experience, and to study the Bible before saying what it is. Finally, it ought not to generalise arbitrarily any given datum, but it should take account of all the facts and distinguish before uniting, analyse before systematising. This is what we have endeavoured to do. Analysis has taught us the diversity of the elements of the Bible, difference between the Old and the New Testaments, difference between the history and the teaching, difference between the content and that which contains, difference in the degree of inspiration. Far, however, from these differences destroying the unity of the Bible, they prove and mani-

fest it. The Bible, we have established, has its unity, the unity of revelation, the unity of history, namely Jesus Christ. It is the spirit of Jesus Christ which pervades it, it is the person of Jesus Christ which forms the centre of it, it is because the age of Jesus Christ is the classic age of the Church, that the religious literature of this age remains the canonical literature of Christendom.

Yes—dogmatic theology has changed, it is changing and will change, but faith will remain, and with faith, the Bible, where faith finds even the object of its belief. The Bible will remain the book of power, the marvellous book, the Book of Books. It will remain to be the light of the spirit and the bread of the soul. In vain it has been made a source of puerile inventions, an aliment for superstitious piety, an arena for the disputes of theologians—it has triumphed over the folly of some and the negations of others, it will triumph still, and will continue for ever to console the sorrows and to satisfy the consciences of men. If there is anything certain in the world, it is that the destiny of the Bible is for ever closely connected with the destinies of all holiness on the earth.

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST.

BY EDMUND SCHERER.

If miracle is in some sort the central question of revelation, since the Gospel could not be a revelation properly so called, without being a supernatural revelation, it will be also granted that the miracles of Jesus form the centre of the question of miracle, and that they offer the principal element of the idea at which we wish to arrive. We are but ill satisfied with the methods which are commonly pursued in this branch of theological study. Some set out with the current definition of miracle, with the idea of natural laws, and then apply their formula to the facts presented by history. Such is the method followed by Strauss. He begins to study the evangelical narratives, only after having declared miracles impossible. After such a declaration no one will expect from him a very impartial consideration of the narratives; and one may justifiably ask if the hypothesis of a free legendary invention, working on the recitals of the Old Testament, is much superior to the naturalistic explanations given by the more ancient rationalism. We cannot regard as much more legitimate, the method which consists in placing the point of departure in the evangelical facts taken wholesale and without criticism. To proceed thus is to be enslaved to an illusion, and that in several ways as to the true condition of things. In the first place, it is to mistake the historical character of our evange-

lists, the traditional origin of the three first, as well as the dogmatical and apologetic aims of the fourth. It is to mistake, on one side, the insensible formation and modifications the gospels underwent, collected as they were from scattered masses of primitive oral tradition; and on the other, the subjective conceptions and aims the possibility of which is involved in such an origin. This is not all—to appeal in a general way to the credibility of our canonical historians is to forget the nature of testimony. When we analyse the formation of the conviction produced by a witness, we readily see that it is the result of two elements; the credibility of the witness—that is to say, his intelligence, his probity, his acquaintance with the facts; and the credibility of the facts themselves to which the witness gives his attestation. You may suppose a witness of so ill a repute or so unfavourably circumstanced, that you would not receive from his lips a fact which, in itself, is likely enough. On the other hand, there are facts so unlikely, as to require for their reception witnesses, numerous and well qualified; perhaps after all, in spite of their averments, you will receive the fact only on interpreting for yourself what seemed improbable, or on reserving a definitive judgment. On the outside of the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures there is no general view of the historical authority of our gospels, which can guarantee the multitude of all their statements, and consequently there is none which can dispense with criticism in detail. Yet that is exactly what orthodoxy lacks, and we here meet with the great illusion of all systems of authority, namely, that “the flag covers the merchandise”—a very good maxim it may be, an international law, but a rule not to be accepted in historical researches. General arguments have always something abstract about them, and the *a priori* method never establishes a solid conviction. The student believes himself convinced

when he is not convinced; he knows not what to answer, and yet he has the feeling that a proof has really not been given; and how little soever he pursues his inquiries, he sees that which he had easily admitted in general, fall in pieces bit by bit.

We hope to follow a surer path in taking our stand on a critical examination of the facts, and on the results, the certainty of which, such an examination may be found to establish. That criticism, it will be at once acknowledged, must be religious as well as historical, since it has to do with religious facts. Moreover the facts thus appreciated form only one of the elements of the question; there is a second not less essential, I mean the manner in which Jesus himself conceives and represents miracle. In the consciousness of the Lord himself we find, together with the most decisive testimony given to the fact, the most authentic instruction as to its true nature, and as a consequence, a new criterion for the appreciation of the miracles recorded in the gospels. These promises once obtained it will be more easy to ascertain what idea of miracle comes out of the miracles of Jesus Christ, and so to obtain, if not a general definition, at least a determination of the most important elements of such a definition.

I.—THE EVANGELICAL NARRATIVES.

There is scarcely any historical fact better attested than—I will not say, the miracles, but the miraculous power of Jesus. It is enough to call to mind that Paul himself worked miracles, that he alludes to the fact as one of common notoriety (Rom. xv., 19; 2 Cor. xii., 12), and that he ascribes the same gift to others as to himself in the primitive Church (1 Cor. xii., 9, 28). Now it would be difficult to concede the power to the disciples without recognising it in the Master,

and not to acknowledge here the right of reasoning *a minori ad majus*, or from the less to the greater. This is not all. We have in addition the general belief of the ancient Church, the universal testimony of the evangelical history, and, what is much more decisive, the expression of the consciousness felt by Jesus himself of possessing and exercising miraculous power.

By the side of the general testimonies stand the particular records in which the Lord appears as invested with that power. But it is precisely here that one difficulty begins—those records being in nature very diverse, and the character of the writings in which we read them not permitting us to accept the statements without examination and without distinction. We thus find ourselves in presence of a critical task from which the theologian is not at liberty to seek exemption.

Let us commence with the negative results. One cannot deny that the examination of the texts at once leads to the elimination of some of the miracles attributed to Jesus. Tradition, which sometimes confound several facts in one, sometimes also makes several out of one. It is possible that the miraculous draught of fish reported by Luke, is an echo of the fact recounted in the last chapter of John. It is probable that the cure done for the centurion of Capernaum is identical with that which was obtained by the entreaty of “a nobleman” of the same city (Matt. viii.; John iv.). It is certain that if Matthew narrates twice the multiplication of bread, it is because he inferred a repetition of the prodigy from a difference of the figures traditionally preserved. Moreover the reasons for doubt present themselves differently. For instance,—we must acknowledge that the circumstances of healing the ten lepers (Luke xvii.) are of a nature to cause us to suspect a parable under a history, if one could admit that Jesus ever gave a place to himself in any of his parables.

In another view, if the religious sentiment easily recognises the connexion of miraculous power with the spiritual dignity of Jesus, if miracle appears to it as a natural and almost necessary feature in the physiognomy of the Redeemer, that general judgment furnishes no criterion for determining the authenticity of this miracle or that. On the contrary, the criticism which is here exercised by the religious sentiment is essentially negative. One in truth cannot read our evangelical recitals without spontaneously making a distinction between the miracles therein reported. While the majority are acts of compassion and deliverance, and thus directly enter into the ministry of him who "went about doing good," there are some, such as that of Jesus walking on the sea, the catching of the fish with the "piece of money" in its mouth; which have no other character than that of the marvellous. Now that character forthwith raises objections. We will not say that the very proportions of miracle, by removing it from all analogy with known events, do not absolutely allow us to figure to our mind the manner in which it is performed. It is omnipotence in the abstract which manifests itself therein, and that seal, far from shocking those who form an idea not less abstract of the deity of Jesus, becomes a new attraction for the infantine and eager imagination of slightly cultivated persons. But there is something more important; miracle thus stripped of all religious character ceases to be miracle, to become nothing more than prodigy, and then, having no relationship with revelation, is no longer distinguished in any way from apocryphal miracles, and has no claim to belong to christian verity. It is true that when the element of religiousness is absent, a new object is sought for. The attempt is not always easy. According to the last and the most resolute of the defenders* of the evangelical history, the changing of the water into

*Ebrard, W., *Kritik der Evang. Geschichte*; 1850, 2nd Edit.

wine and the walking on the sea were intended to manifest the deity of the Lord, while in the miracle of the "piece of money" Jesus showed himself the king to whom the entire world is subject, and by the multiplication of the bread, he meant to try and to select his disciples; and after the same manner he struck the fig tree with barrenness as a symbol of the fate which awaited Israel, and as the sign was in danger of not being understood, he gave the explanation of it with his own lips. Where? In Matthew xxiv, 32! We do not know that it is possible to find a better explanation of the statements in question, but we do know, and know well, that it is impossible to find one which more compromises their reality. The purely epidietic miracle, that is, the miracle which has no other aim than the manifestation of miraculous power, raises the most serious difficulties. The object assigned cannot be attained independently of the internal character which its advocates are obliged to deny it; considered as simple prodigies, the miracles of Jesus over nature, are inferior to those of Moses and Elias, and accordingly cannot manifest his deity without implicating theirs. Add to this that the doctrine of Jesus himself on the subject of miracle absolutely disowns the point of view under consideration, and that critical reflexion tries in vain to appropriate it we shall presently see.

Among the results which we have up to this obtained, some are positive, but too general, and the others are more precise, but exclusively negative. However, we believe that criticism may arrive at something more satisfactory. The first thing to be done is to seek among the miracles reported by the evangelists, some of those internal characters of truth which occasionally make up for the insufficiency of external testimony; and since the quality of the writings cannot on this point guarantee the certainty of the facts, we must consider whether those facts, viewed first in themselves, may

not bear witness to their own reality. Thus is it certainly with most of the words of Jesus. They bear in their simplicity, originality and depth, the indestructible seal of their authenticity; each word carries conviction with it, and the criticism of Strauss so prejudiced, yet, at the bottom so intelligent, has not been able to impair this magnificent diamond. Unhappily a fact, being a less immediate and less characteristic expression of personal qualities is rarely susceptible of the same evidence. One cure resembles another; this prodigy resembles that; and if particular circumstances sometimes accompany a miracle, and give it a more marked physiognomy (e.g. Mark vii., 31 seq., viii., 22. seq.) those circumstances are for the most part wanting, or sometimes must be attributed to the narrator.

All this does not prevent us from being able to attain in some cases a degree of certainty which leaves nothing to be wished for. There are miracles, the performance of which are indissolubly linked to one of the words of the Saviour, of which we spoke but now, the unique character of which excludes doubt; or to some expression, equally characteristic of another personage. When the centurion expresses in a manner so natural and so lively his confidence in the power of Jesus; when the Canaanitish woman, put to the test by the refusal, consents to be accounted a dog which picks up the crumbs under its master's table; there is in those features a character of authenticity which, criticism cannot disown, and the force of which extends to the miracle itself. It is, it seems to me, the same with the reasoning with which Jesus repels the reproach of being in league with Beelzebub, and the *argumentum ad hominem* by which he justifies himself in having done cures on the Sabbath day (Matt xii. 11). Here also, the word bears an impress, the origin of which cannot be mistaken, and that word supposes a miraculous healing. It is not always so I

acknowledge. The more often this signature is not found. Besides there are cases in which you may sunder the word from the fact with which it stands connected. Thus the saying "I will make you fishers of men" does not of necessity suppose a miraculous draft of fishes, but only the known profession of John and Zebedee. Thus the discourse of Jesus on the temple tax, and the power of faith are perfectly separable from the miracles of "the piece of money" and the fig tree. Not less does it remain established that we have some miracles certainly wrought by Jesus, and that that certainty illustrates the miraculous power of the Saviour, at least in the sphere of facts analagous to those which furnish us with the proof in question.

II.—THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS.

In speaking of miracles one may say that the fact is not wholly in the fact, and that the capital element of the miracles of Jesus is the manner in which he conceives and presents them himself. The thought of the great teacher on the subject offers us indeed less the dogmatic idea to which we are tending, than one of the historical facts on which the idea must be founded, and at the same time, a new criterion for the appreciation of the evangelical naratives.

You cannot examine the conduct and the words of Jesus, relative to miracle, without being struck with the negative, and in some sort polemical turn by which they are characterised. The Lord Jesus does not set forth the thought on the point didactically and directly: he expresses it constantly under the form of an opposition to the ideas of those by whom he is surrounded. This is true especially of Christ as he appears in the first three gospels—which here as in every subject of study, you must carefully distinguish from the fourth.

The point of view which thus determines the angle under which the question presents itself to us in the synoptics, is the vulgar notion of miracle, that which still prevails among the less thoughtful. The hearers of our Lord regard miracles as a testimonial letter given to a divine envoy to accredit his mission, and proclaim the confidence which his word deserves. This is what may be called teleological conception of miracles. Now the entire life and teaching of Jesus seems to us to exclude this conception, and sometimes even to repel it, very directly.

In the first place, on all occasions Jesus refuses to perform miracles when they are asked of him, that is, to give, according to the popular notion, the proofs of his mission which his contemporaries thought they had a right to demand. We remind the reader of the two first features of the temptation. Jesus refuses to employ his miraculous power either to satisfy hunger, or simply to show his supernatural authority. Matthew informs us that Jesus did not perform many miracles at Nazareth because of the incredulity of its inhabitants (xiii. 58). Whether this want of faith is attributed to the sick only or to the whole population, we are equally brought to this strange result, namely that Jesus made the presence of faith a condition of his working those miracles, the supposed object of which was to produce faith. One would on the contrary think that he ought to have multiplied them in the degree in which they were received with incredulity. Besides the Jews declare themselves ready to believe if Jesus shows them a sign; they adduce the example of Moses and the manna; Christ answers by turning the conversation to purely spiritual subjects (John vi. 30) Herod hopes to see some of those wonders of which he has heard so much said; the accused Jesus keeps silence, and does nothing to answer to this desire (Luke xxiii. 8). It serves no purpose to allege the vain curiosity with which Herod

and the Jews were animated. Either miracle is destined to overcome unbelief; and then it is always in its proper place where unbelief appears; or miracle exacts certain moral conditions in order to be accepted; and then you take away from its teleological value as much as you ascribe to it a religious character.

But Jesus does not merely refuse to perform the miracles which are asked of him; he makes the refusal in terms which in the most significant manner exclude the notion commonly attached to those manifestations. To those who asked of him "a sign from heaven" he replies by directing their eyes to the "signs of the times" (Matt. xvi. 1—3) that is, the great moral, spiritual and social phenomena of the day—such as the aspirations and hopes of the people, the Gospel announced to babes, the forthcoming of the kingdom of God open to all, the publicans and even women of ill fame rushing toward it, the spirit on all sides overflowing, and submerging the old forms of thought, usage and habit, finally, the presence of him whom many prophets and just men had desired to see. (Matt. xiii. 16; xxi. 32.)

It is thus that Jesus repels a similar request by those words which an evangelist has reported under a form so much the more authentic that he has little understood them himself: "destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again" (John ii., 19; Matt. xxvi., 61; Acts vi., 14). Jesus, instead of performing the required miracle, appeals to the power which he possesses to substitute another form of worship, another religion, another dispensation, in place of that of which the temple is the seat and the symbol. In other words he refuses to legitimatise his mission otherwise than by his mission itself: he throws himself not on something outward, such as a wonder, but solely on the consciousness of his right, and on

the manner in which he exercises that right; he presents himself here as the master of the temple, as elsewhere the master of the Sabbath.

Something still more decisive: requests for miracles were so natural, so deeply founded in the gross minds of the Jewish people, that they were frequently renewed. We have seen several examples: Matthew and Luke report another (Matt. xii., 38—42; xvi., 4; Luke xi., 29—32). In this case Jesus rejects the request with the most rigorous expression of blame, and declares that no sign shall be given to the Jews except the sign of the prophet Jonah. In what does that sign consist, and what does the expression signify? According to Matthew, the sign is a marvel analogous to that offered in the story of Jonah—that is, the abode of Jesus in the heart of the earth:—an interpretation arbitrary and impossible, and which everthing forces us to refer to a mind incapable of seizing the deep sense of the true answer given by our Lord. Not only in reality was the abode of Jonah in the whale's belly a sign to no one, not only the resurrection of Jesus, could not be a sign to the Jews who did not see him after his crucifixion, but the sense indicated by Matthew is contrary to the context. It is even doubly contrary. Jesus could not refuse a sign, and refuse it with reproach while referring to a prodigy which exactly answered to the request he repels. One cannot understand how he should refuse them the less while granting them the greater, or what purpose in such a case his refusal could have. The contradiction is manifest. But it is not the only one. The narrative of Luke does not contain the passage under our notice; much rather it excludes the passage while presenting the person of Jonah, and his ministry in general as the sign offered to the Ninivites (30); and the account given in Matthew itself protests against the gloss it has been forced to receive. The true interpretation

is found in the verses which ensue (41, 42). There we no longer read of Jonah's adventures, but simply of his preaching; and Christ is declared superior to him, not by his miracles, but in his general character, and if the Ninevites are one day to condemn the Jews, it is because they listened to the words of the prophet, and not because they yielded to the evidence of the prodigies which they did not witness. In a word, remove from the narrative of Matthew verse the fortieth, and you will have a speech which will be not only in agreement with Luke, but consistent in itself, as well as profound, moral, and instructive; allow the verse to remain, and you have an account in which everything becomes enigmatical and contradictory.

The primitive tenor of the discourse once re-established, this is what it presents to our mind. First, a positive meaning; Jesus is a sign to the Jews in the way in which Jonah was a sign to the inhabitants of Nineveh, by his appearance, by his ministry, by his word. His person is a sign, that is, the index of a revelation from God, so that Jesus declares that the revelation and the sign which is to cause it to be accepted; that the divine word and its proof; that the object of faith and its attestation, consist in the intrinsic spiritual evidence of the Gospel; an idea well worthy of our attention; an idea which all our future inquiries will more and more confirm; and which our age, not less gross than that of Christ, has not less difficulty to accept. But by the side of the positive meaning there is in the passage a negative sense not less important. Jesus not only gives the spiritual qualities of his mission as the true sign and evidence of his mission, he declares besides that his miracles have not the object imputed to them, and that if they form part of his ministry, and consequently are a sign as that ministry itself, it is only on

the same grounds, and in virtue of their intrinsic religious character.

The point of view which comes into sight in these replies given by the Saviour to the requests of the Jews, is confirmed by a great number of facts and declarations. When Nicodemus declares that he recognises in the miracles of Jesus, an attestation from on high when the Gallileans ask of Jesus how he passed over the sea, Jesus turns the conversation aside to the new birth and the eternal nutriment (John ii., 2, 3; vi., 25, 26). If he commends the faith of Peter as resting on an altogether spiritual basis (Matt. xvi., 17; John vi., 68, 69), he in other places expresses himself with a species of impatience in regard to the belief which needs miracle (John vi., 48). Whence it ensues that Jesus possesses in himself those titles and claims of faith, and that faith in him is possible without miracle, but not that Jesus does miracles to produce faith, nor that the faith thus produced is the only true faith. The examples cited by John sufficiently prove the contrary (ii., 19, 20; v., 36—38; vi., 15; xii., 41). We find the same thought in the words addressed to Thomas, "Blessed are those who believe but have not seen;" and still more in the parable of Lazarus, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they hear though one rose from the dead" (Luke xvi., 29).

The character of the majority of the miracles ascribed to Jesus Christ, and precisely of those whose reality is most confirmed by examination, adds support to our interpretation. They are cures, acts of mercy, in which the moral aspect manifestly outshines the simply marvellous. This is so true that the Jews are not satisfied with such evidence, and ceaselessly demand fresh wonders. To this circumstance sufficient attention has not been paid. Miracle with Jesus is not the

striking prodigy that it ought to be to act as the proof of the mission of him by whom it is performed.

When Jesus bestows on his disciples the power of working cures, it is merely as a means of beneficence, and without any intimation of the argumentative power they might hence deduce.

If the miracles had for their purpose the proof of Christianity, it is impossible to understand why Jesus commanded his disciples to keep them concealed, why indeed he should perform miracles which he would not allow to be made known (Matt. viii., 4 ; ix., 30 ; xii., 16).

Finally, we come to a word which appears to us altogether remarkable: "Behold I cast out demons, and do cures today and tomorrow and the third day I shall be perfected" (Luke xiii. 32.) According to this, Jesus considers his miracles as being essentially acts of healing, since he mentions no others, and he regards those acts of healing not as attestations of his mission, but as directly entering into it and forming an integral part of it; not as the Eternal seal put thereon, but as the very substance of the work.

It is thus that all the elements of the thought of Christ, scattered through our Gospel, converge towards the same point, and with a striking unanimity, present an idea of miracle as opposed to that of the Jews as it is to the old form of Christian evidence. However there remain two or three passages which are often brought forward in this discussion, which a superficial examination might be tempted to oppose to the results we have obtained, but which in truth confirm that result in the most striking manner, when they are looked into somewhat closely.

Thus we often hear alleged in favour of the teleological idea of miracle, the argument which Jesus set forth against the Pharisees: "But if I cast out devils by the spirit of God,

then the kingdom of God is come unto you," (Matt. xii. 23.) But the question is not that of miracle as an eternal attestation; the kingdom of God is itself a healing, a deliverance, a victory over Satan; the freedom of the soul from demons is not a sign of the coming of the kingdom but rather its realization, and it is not a proof of its presence except as it is its manifestation. We here find the constant thought of Jesus—spiritual things legitimate themselves directly.

The same interpretation forces itself on us with greater necessity when we read, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin? Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sack-cloth and ashes. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell," &c. (Matt. xi. 21—23.) How poor the teleological notion of miracle appears in this instance. How exaggerated and extravagant does the passage seem if you take "the mighty works" as a simple attestation of the mission of Christ. And then Capernaum to have been "exalted unto heaven" by the privilege of witnessing prodigies! and to have merited the being brought down to hell by not having believed them! And that repentance which Sidon would have infallibly undergone under the influence of such marvels! And besides, what in this point of view, are the miracles of Jesus compared with those of Moses, of Elijah, of Elisha? O the carnal Judaism of our theology and our Christianity!

But the most remarkable of those passages and the most important for the right understanding of the miracles of Jesus, that which gives us the whole key to the subject, is precisely that which seems to offer most support to the gross interpretation we oppose. John the Baptist conceives doubts relative to the mission of him whom he had saluted as the Messiah, and whose humble ministry corresponds so little with the

expectation he had formed. From his dungeon he sends two of his disciples to ask of Jesus if he is truly He who is to come. Jesus charges them with the answer, "Go and show John those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the Gospel preached to them; and blessed is he who shall not be offended in me." (Matt. xi, 4 6.) There are several things here which deserve attention. In the first place, these words are an allusion to the Messianic passage, (Isaiah xxxv, 5) so that the mere fact of the citation implies an affirmative answer to John's enquiry. Then Jesus enumerates the signs of his mission, in following a marked gradation, a gradation which sufficiently indicates the place given to raisings from the dead, a gradation, the culminating point of which is the preaching of the Gospel to the poor. Now, this last term of the climax forms an oxymoron, a kind of paradox of expression, which Jesus is fond of employing, and by which he here presents as proof of his mission, the very facts in which John had doubted if he could recognise the Messiah, and as the highest proof that feature which gave most trouble to John's mind, the proclamation of the Kingdom of God specially to the lowly. At the same time the last feature thus presented as the most significant of the signs of the ministry of Jesus, sufficiently shows in what sense we ought to take the others. The enumeration does not contain heterogeneous elements—on the one side preaching, on the other miracles; but, as the gradation of the thoughts requires, elements perfectly homogeneous, the true signs of the presence of the Messiah. Accordingly, Jesus by mentioning the preaching of the good news to the poor, indicates, in the most significant manner, in what sense he regards and presents his miracles as signs of the divinity of his mission. It is not as prodigies, for John well knew

that Jesus wrought cures, and was astonished precisely because they were not more wondrous. Our Lord does not say—"John requires miracles—well, I perform some, go and report them;" a platitude to which the common interpretation inevitably comes. The reply of Jesus contains an allusion to the carnal nature of John's expectations, and has no other end than to correct his views as to the character of the Kingdom of God. John regarded the miracles of Jesus as too humble, too obscure; he also wanted some sign direct from heaven. Jesus replies by drawing his attention to the intrinsic nature of his miracles; leaving out that element of prodigy with which John's mind was filled, he presents them to him under the aspect of pity, deliverance, benefaction. The proofs of the Messiaship of the Saviour, he gives him to understand, are all spiritual; he succours humanity in its sufferings and bears the glad tidings to the despised children of men

It is not necessary to explain the juxta-position of these two things—the healing of the body and the healing of the soul. Nevertheless the connexion of these two parts of the work of Christ is closer in his mind than might at first be supposed. On this point the passage with which we are engaged offers a valuable indication. In effect the text of Isaiah to which Jesus refers is in no way a prediction of the miracles of the Messiah, but a figurative description of the return of the Israelite exiles from Babylon. The deliverance of the blind and the deaf, of the lame and the dumb, is the image of the joy caused by the termination of the captivity. Jesus does not take this figurative passage in a literal sense to apply it literally to his cures, but in his own cures he sees also a symbol, the image of another deliverance—they are the emblem of the redemption which he is working out in the spiritual world. The indication which Jesus here gives us of

the symbolical character of his miracles contains a point of view valuable for the study of those facts.

That which predominates in the reply to the message of the Baptist is the sense in which the Saviour presents his miracles as signs of his Messiahship. They are so, but on the same grounds as the Gospel preached to the poor:—they are so, less as prodigies than as healings; less as works of power than works of redemption; and thus we find ourselves brought back to the result already obtained: the miracles of Jesus are less proofs of his divine mission than manifestations of that mission itself; and they are the proof of it only so far as they are its exercise; the substance, and display thereof.

If now we pass from the synoptical gospels to that of John, we find ourselves conducted by a different rout to an end which is absolutely the same. Here the idea of miracle is intimately connected with the fundamental idea of the book. That idea is christological; it is the manifestation of the divinity of the logos or word made flesh, a manifestation which is at the same time a revelation of the Father; Christ, if we may use such an expression, is the exponent of God. The sum of the theology of John and his gospel may be stated in these words—"He who has seen the son has seen the Father." Well, the whole life of Christ—words and actions—is a manifestation of the divinity which is in him, and the supernatural is an altogether special manifestation of it. Such is the important fact which the miracles play in the economy of the fourth gospel. John reports few miracles, but he arranges them in a gradation, and recognises in them a sense essentially dogmatic, the display of the divinity of Christ.

This idea is indicated at the commencement. Miracle is a showing forth of the glory of Christ (ii, 11) or, what comes to the same, a proof of the in-dwelling of the Father, and of the intimate union of the Son with the Father (x. 38; xiv. 9,

10). This is also that which is signified by the opened heavens and the angels ascending and descending on the son of man (i. 52), and it is in this sense that Jesus exclaims, "Ye have seen me and believe not!" (vi 36). It may, it is true, be asked in what way miracle manifests the divinity of Christ, whether as prodigy, in the abstract and external sense of supernaturalism, or, in a deeper and more spiritual sense, in virtue of the religious quality of the act. But if, on one side, it is difficult to understand what religious character the conversion of water into wine can have, on another, it is not less so to see how the teleological notion can explain the cited passages. Miracles thus conceived would prove the favour of God, but not an ethical and a metaphysical union with him, a spiritual and real presence of the Father in the Son. The objection drawn from the miracle at Cana may bear against the authenticity of the fact, but not against the idea which the evangelist had thereof

To the passages which we have cited must be joined those in which the miracles of Jesus are spoken of under a designation peculiar to John. The other evangelists make use of the terms "wonder," "power," "sign;" which designate miracle either as prodigy, or in regard to the superior force manifested in it, or as proof or manifestation of the divine. John frequently employs the word works to designate, not miracle in particular, but the whole spiritual agency of Christ (iv. 34; xvii 4) and the miracles of Christ as constituting an integral part of his agency; as destined, like all the acts of Christ, to express that divine glory the manifestation of which is the object of his coming, and consequently as being of the same spiritual nature as the rest of his doings. The miracles of Jesus, are not the attestation and recommendation of his ministry; they are acts of that ministry, acts which have not their value exterior to

themselves, but in themselves; the value of which is not in their argumentative character, but in their own intrinsic nature. The term "work," in being applied at once to the miracles and the religious power of the Saviour, assimilates things which can in consequence be no longer considered as disparate. When Jesus speaks of "greater works" which he is to accomplish and works still greater which his disciples are to do (v., 20; xiv., 12), he evidently refers to miracles wrought in the kingdom of mind, and the comparison confirms the analogy. When the "works" of Christ are presented as a proof of the intimate union of the Son with the Father, of the abiding of the one in the other, it is impossible to attribute this effect to mere prodigy (x., 28; xiv., 10, 11). When we read that the Jews would not have had sinned if Christ had not done among them works which no other had done, we are constrained to admit that miracle is something else than a proof, or rather that it is a proof only in its spiritual character, that the proof lies in that spiritual character itself (xv., 24). The sense of the word thus fixed, it must be extended to other passages, which, if they were insulated, might be explained in another sense, but which lend themselves better to that which we have indicated (v., 26; x., 25, 32; xv., 24).

This sense is found in passages such as vi., 26, and xi., 42. In the first Jesus reproaches the Jews with looking to the physical advantage which they derived from the multiplication of the bread, rather than to the sign which manifested his glory. In the second (compare verses 4 and 15) we have doubtless a reflexion on the effect of the miracle which appears out of place in Christ's prayer, and which one is disposed to make the narrator answerable for; but, all considered, we have nothing which obliges us to admit a contradiction to the idea of miracle of which the whole Gospel offers the elements. If the resurrection of Lazarus was to produce in the specta-

tors, belief in the mission of Christ, it is because it was to manifest the glory of Christ. Nothing however stands in the way of admitting that there is in the fourth Gospel a certain oscillation between the two views of miracle—one more external, the other more internal, as there is an oscillation relative to the person of the Saviour between the ethical view and the metaphysical. These views do not indeed exclude each other; and the spiritual character which Jesus marks in his miracles does not exclude their value as means of proof, but gives to that proof itself a more profound character.

The examination of the gospels into which we have gone has shewn a remarkable agreement in those writings as to the doctrine of Jesus touching miracle, and it now remains only to define the dogmatical result of these investigations.

III.—THE DOGMATIC IDEA.

Up to this time we have employed the word miracle in its vague acceptation. But it is important to determine what a miracle is. This we propose to do in taking our stand on the facts which we have studied, that is, in the miracles and in the mind of Jesus himself.

We must premise that the sphere of miracle is physical nature. You gratuitously complicate the question if you extend the term to an action on the mind, such as the phenomena of conversion and the religious life.

This being said, miracle presents itself to us at first as an inexplicable thing, more, as a thing contrary to the laws of causation which experience has rendered familiar to us. In other words, miracle is a product of an unknown cause. This is what they call the formal or negative element of miracle.

But this element gives us prodigy and not miracle. Simple prodigy having no religious character, stands in no relation

with our religious sentiment, and cannot be an object of faith to us. For prodigy to become miracle it must take to itself a positive or material element, in virtue of which it becomes a religious deed. Now, this is what we find in the bulk of the miracles ascribed to Jesus. They are specially cures, acts of beneficence, works of deliverance, and this positive element predominates over the other in the thought of the Saviour.

This points out to us in what relationship the miracles of Jesus stand with his work considered as a whole. They are an integral part of it. His cures are not merely the symbol, they are the counterpart of the spiritual redemption he brings to the world. We here find the deep connexion which the doctrine of the Bible establishes between sin and suffering. The Kingdom of God is, in all cases, healing, enfranchisement, restoration.

Under this view, as a redemptive act, miracle is in close and necessary relationship with the person of Jesus, the Redeemer. His work is himself; and miracle, as making part of his work, is an emanation of his person, an expression of his nature and his life. The redeeming action of Jesus is before all the manifestation, and, so to say, the exhibition of his personality; his word expresses what he is, and his miracles are another form of that expression.

If it is thus, miracle is truly the act of Jesus. It is a product of his liberty and of his mind. He is not the author of miracle in an apparent or mechanical sense, but in a real sense. He is not the channel of his supernatural virtue, a simple instrument in the hands of God; miracle is his act, just as every moral act is his; it springs from the depth of his spiritual nature; and if Jesus receives and holds it from God, it is in the same way as that in which he refers to God every gift and every grace. This rests on all we have seen in the foregoing pages; but, in reality, such an idea needs no

proof. It forces itself on the religious mind still more than on the scientific mind. On the outside of the mechanical conception of supernaturalism it is impossible to conceive of miracle except as in direct relationship with the personality of him by whom it is performed, and the thoroughly religious miracles of Jesus otherwise than as being in direct relationship with his religious personality.

All this goes to declare that the study of the facts of the case tend to substitute, relatively to the miracles of Jesus, an ethical value in place of the theological, the dynamical point of view in place of the mechanical, and the relative conception in place of the absolute. Let us take up the different terms of this antithesis.

The theological notion of miracle sees in it before everything else an object, and places that object on the outside of the act itself; miracle is there only to accredit the divine messenger in his functions as a revealer. Accordingly, the true, the only author of miracle is God himself; man who shows the phenomenon, is merely an instrument: the act is not his act, and then the teleological point of view inevitably leads to the mechanical one. Moreover, all holds together in this conception, and the mechanical notion is inseparable from the notion of absolute miracle; which consists in passing over all so-called causes in order to ascend directly and immediately to God.

The connection is not less real and intimate between the different terms of the opposite conception. The ethical idea of miracle is that which considers it as a specially moral act, and in consequence, as having its end in itself. Now, a moral act has no character except as emanating from the moral nature of an individual, and except as being truly his act because the product of his personal energy. This is what we call the dynamic idea. But the moment that a miracle of Christ is a personal and moral act, it becomes not only useless but contra-

dictory to have recourse to another cause than the spiritual nature of Christ, and the miracles which he performed enter into that relative notion which does not think it necessary to ascend above secondary cause, merely because they act in a manner entirely new and unknown.

The question of the credibility and of the argumentative value of miracle receives a solution essentially different, according as you place yourself in the one or the other of these points of view. It is besides clear that we must distinguish in this question between the ocular witness of the miracle, and those who like us can have no knowledge of it except through the medium of an historic testimony; that we must distinguish specially between the mind which is cultivated, thoughtful, critical; and the uncultivated, to which prodigy is an attraction, and which believes in the supernatural the more easily the less it is acquainted with the laws of nature. Having made this distinction, we hold that in the teleological point of view, miracle, far from being able to serve as an attestation to any doctrine whatever, cannot even become the object of a well-founded conviction. A simple prodigy, lacking religious character, or possessing that character only accidentally, it is out of keeping with the Christian revelation, out of keeping with evangelical faith; accordingly it is inevitably and absolutely incredible. According to the system of supernaturalism, miracle is a pure supernatural deed, external to revelation, alien to faith; which addresses the natural man through the medium of his senses and which is to lead him to acknowledge an intervention of God, in favour of a divine envoy, and, as a consequence, to receive the teachings thus sanctioned from above. According to this, belief in miracle leads to faith, but is distinct from it. That is to say, it is not a moral act, and consequently no one can be held responsible for his want of belief in this respect. If conviction is to come to me through

my senses and my intelligence, it is to the account of my senses or my intelligence that I must place my doubts. Man is answerable for only moral convictions, because only they are free. We go still further. Faith supported by miracle becomes not only an affair of caprice, accident or culture, but an impossibility. Confidence in the laws of nature will often gain the victory, and ought always to gain the victory over a prodigy, the certainty of which depends on human testimony, for testimony constantly deceives us and the laws of nature never deceive us. I do not deny that miracle may be an introduction to faith, a faith at first external and carnal, afterwards spiritual and living; but I declare that this effect has never been produced by pure and simple miracle, unless by a vice of reasoning, on which we certainly may congratulate the believer, but which we certainly cannot elevate into a law of intelligence.

In the ethical point of view, miracle being one with the work of Christ, of which it is a homogeneous element, is a proof of the divine mission of Christ, in the sense in which that divine mission serves as a proof to itself. Such, in reality, is the true legitimation of spiritual things. They prove themselves in presenting themselves; their appearance is their demonstration; they immediately address those deep inexpressible wants of the soul, in virtue of which the sinner owns God's gifts, hails them with joy, and seizes them as his eternal patrimony. One may say of miracles what Paul said of prophecy, they are a sign, yet not for the unbeliever, but for the believer. (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.)

Finally, we desire it should be observed that if we have disallowed the notion of absolute miracle, it is solely as being inapplicable to the particular facts which we have studied in this essay. We do not pretend to deny it, *à priori*, and in a general manner. Independently of the manifest interest which

theism finds in maintaining it, there is a great number of facts in Biblical history or otherwheres—voices from heaven, fire from on high, sudden destruction, which not being performed by a human medium, must be traced to a direct intervention of God, if sufficiently evidenced, and well established, and which might find in their connexion with the Christian revelation, the character of credibility, which pure prodigies do not possess. As to their authenticity, it belongs to criticism, to the criticism which is at once scientific and religious, to pronounce a decision. All we think it now necessary to maintain is, that the acts of healing ascribed to Jesus, come not within that notion; is that the epidiectic miracles which are ascribed to him find no support in his doctrine or his consciousness; is finally that the ethical and dynamical characters manifest themselves equally (the latter, however, more distinctly than the former) in the best attested apostolic miracles. It would remain (did time serve) to appreciate the miracles of which the Saviour appears to be less the author than the object, especially that of the resurrection. Let it suffice in this respect, to remind the reader that the two points of view are equally Biblical. If Jesus had the power to lay down his life, and to take it up again (John x. 18) the resurrection was his own act, that is a manifestation of the power of his spirit over death and over nature.

WHAT THERE IS IN THE BIBLE.

A SERMON BY T. COLANI.

“Search (You search) the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me; and (but) ye will not come to me that ye might (may) have life, John v. 39, 40.

The heart of man is so made as to be incapable of happiness when without God. By the uneasiness which accompanies ordinary pleasures, by the tedium which results from relaxations, by the disquiet which arises in the bosom of repose, we are compelled to turn our regards away from this world while we say “Vanity of Vanities!” We need a life superior to this life; if our heart is to be filled, we need the infinite. But God whom we thus call for, our eye does not see; he is inappreciable, difficult of apprehension; while the world is about us as if it were reality itself, thrusting itself on us through the five senses, taking possession of ourselves by means of the body. Knowing to what a degree the slaves of the world are wretched, the soul protests, but protests with small effect; she nevertheless lets herself be captured, unless God becomes to her more than a sigh, a desire or even an idea. Now nature with her beauties, by turn, sweet and sublime, shows as clearly an admirable order in the universe; she awakens in us a mysterious echo which may be the poetry of religion; but she does not unveil the face of God to us. The contemplation

of human destiny, and the study of our own heart make us feel that if virtue, if remorse, if conscience are not vain words, God not only exists, but is also the supreme disposer of all things. But even that is not sufficient. Reduced to consult only nature and reason we should feel a painful insulation. It would be with us as with navigators, who, possessing neither rudder nor compass, suddenly become aware that the current is hurrying them toward an ocean having no shore. They know that their native land exists, that it is a magnificent land, that they are beloved by their families and their friends; this they know, but this does not fill them with strength or joy. In the same way, if no real and obvious bond bind us to the Heavenly Father, if we cannot go beyond philosophic deductions, as positive as regrets, but not less empty, we are most unfortunate of beings—seeing too dimly to see God through opaque matter, and seeing not dimly enough to own that matter is worthless.

What joy then to know that God has not left us to ourselves. No! we are not condemned merely to feel after God; to search for him by some process of mental divination. He has made himself manifest; he has made himself manifest in the Bible. Everywhere else, if only you sound the ground before you set your foot thereon, you find a moving sand; you find men's opinion, it may be men's prejudices; at the bottom no few of men's illusions. But when you sound the Bible, you reach the rock, the Eternal Rock, God.

The way to so grand a result is worth consideration. The Pharisees read the Old Testament Scriptures, they read and scrutinized them; and the Lord Jesus while approving the act, declares in our text that the study did not lead them to the truth. Not much surprised should we be at the failure, if they had treated the book as a purely human book—just as we read the works of some pious thinker of former days. But

no! they thought they had eternal life in those writings; eternal life, that is, the supreme good, a revelation of God's will; and from other historical sources we know that they regarded their sacred writings with a respect, which knew no bounds, every phrase from the lips of Moses or a prophet was to them an oracle coming to them from God, as directly as if God had himself pronounced it. Nevertheless, the Scripture remains to them a sealed book. They read it, and they do not see that it bears testimony to Jesus; they study it, and they find there the promise of a very different Messiah; they scrutinise it, and they end by believing that it bids them put the Christ of God to death.

“What blindness!” You will say. Nevertheless examine yourselves; Do you read the Bible as it was read by the Jews? If so may you not fall into similar perdition?

Jesus, a poor and unlettered man, spending his time in journeys, in teachings, in cures; Jesus, who comes with no other sign than the testimony of John the Baptist and some miracles, claims acceptance as the Messiah. The Jews are versed in the prophecies—do they receive him? They consult the most recent of those books; it is at the same time the most explicit—they consult the book of Daniel. There they learn that when Messiah comes, God himself, the “Ancient of days,” shall appear in person, having for his throne a devouring flame. Then are the books opened; then is the judgement. And then shall come the Son of man. He shall come in the clouds of heaven; and he shall receive from Jehovah, dominion over all nations. These things the Pharisees read, and hence they conclude “Jesus is not the Son of man.”

If however that page of Daniel stood alone! But in many another passage where the prophets describe the salvation to come, they use similar colours. Material form is the distinctive trait of the Saviour whom they foretell; and they expect

from him the conquest of the enemies of Israel—whether the Babylonians, the Syrians, or the Edomites. Listen to Isaiah (lxiii),

THE PEOPLE.

Who is he that cometh from Edom?
In scarlet garments from Bozrah?
This, that is glorious in his apparel,
Proud in the greatness of his strength?

THE AVENGER.

I, that proclaim deliverance,
And am mighty to save

THE PEOPLE.

Wherefore is thy apparel scarlet?
And thy garment as of those who tread the wine-press?

THE AVENGER.

I have trodden the wine-press alone,
And of the nations none was with me.
And I trod them in my anger;
And I trampled them in my fury;
So their blood sprinkled my garments,
And stained all my apparel.
For the day of vengeance was in my heart,
And the year of my delivering was at hand.
And I looked and there was none to help,
And I wondered there was none to uphold.
Wherefore my own arm achieved victory,
And my fury alone sustained me.
I trod down the nations in my anger;
I crushed them in my rage,
I made the soil drink their blood.

Is there not a complete and unqualified opposition between this Saviour, who makes the blood of his foes flow on all sides to satiate his wrath, and the work of Christ, who sheds no blood but his own, and sheds that blood on the cross, while praying for his murderers?

The teachings of Jesus also must have appeared to the Jews in contradiction with the Scriptures. "Love your enemies," he said (Matt. v. 44.), while the Psalmist, when a

captive in Babylon, cried aloud, "O daughter of Babylon, happy the man who shall seize thy little ones, and dash them against the rocks (Psalm cxxxvii), "Bless them who curse you; do good to them who hate you; pray for them who calumniate you" (Matt. v. 54). And in the Old Testament it is said: "Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let strangers spoil his labour. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children, &c." (Ps. cix).

How could Jesus say that the Scriptures testified to him? He changes the law; he adds to it, he takes from it—and the law had formally said, "You shall add nothing to their commandments you shall diminish nothing from them" (Deut. iv. 2). He declares external things of no value, as able neither to sully nor to purify the man, while the Old Testament seems to make his moral condition depend principally on the observance or the violation of ceremonial requirements.

Yes; but by the side of the passage which I have just cited there are others very different. If Jehovah ordains a whole host of sacrifices and ceremonies, he also declares "I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." (Hos. vi. 6). And the Psalmist whose conscience is loaded with adultery and murder, is well aware that victims are unable to reconcile him with the righteous God who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity. "I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation. Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; the

sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." (Ps. li.) You see salvation by penitence, by faith, by grace, which is the Gospel itself, is taught or at least longed for in the Old Testament.

Sometimes also the prophets show how they know there is a virtue more prevailing than force, and that the lot which is most worthy of God's servant is not triumph but grief, grief undergone for others, devotedness. The same prophet, who places before our eyes the Saviour, proud and strong in his bearing, and trampling on nations in the wine-press of battle, paints the servant of God as cast down more than any other.

If however during the agony of the Saviour, this passage had been read to the Pharisees, who scorned and scoffed beneath the cross, could they have failed to recognise in him, who hung there, the true servant of God?

In fine, my brethren, the Jews found in their sacred writings opposite elements; these favourable, those contrary to the person and the doctrine of the Lord Jesus: by the side of passages quite gospel-like in tone, they read others bearing the imprint of an exclusive patriotism. It was absolutely necessary to distinguish which of the two ought to be taken to the letter, as expressing an eternal truth; and it is because they did not make that choice that the Pharisees ended by rejecting the true Messiah. The choice was of high importance; it was indispensable;—was it also difficult? The text supplies the answer, "But ye WILL NOT come to me that ye may have life." Yes, all depended on an act of the will. There was no need of learned criticism; the option was not to take what they liked and leave what they disliked; all that was necessary was that they should place themselves in face of the Scriptures (like a child with his eyes fixed on the eyes of his father) with an ardent wish to learn God's will, and

that will doubtless they would have ascertained. Is there anyone, who could refuse assent to this declaration, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice?" Are you not also as a man forced to agree with the Psalmist when he asserts, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." These are ideas which, once enunciated, seize and master us, whatever we do. If anyone should profess to doubt this perfect truth, I would reply to him by a flat contradiction, as I would reply to a man who denied that twice two make four. Either you are, or you are not a man; now every man is morally constituted in such a way that he is in conscience unable to place matter above mind, and to fancy that God prefers the shedding of human blood, even were it in torrents, to the slightest movement of humility and love. In those two passages—not to speak of others—the Jews had the key to all their sacred books, for those two passages contain an incontestible truth, and nothing that contradicts them can be true. Had they so willed, they would have seen that it is better to bless one's persecutors than to curse them, and that consequently it was more worthy of the Messiah to come without form and appearance, bending beneath poverty and contempt, than to descend on the clouds of heaven, surrounded by angels and devouring flames. Had they so willed, they would have understood the confused testimony rendered by the Old Testament to Jesus of Nazareth, and with faith and love they would have seized his hand extended for their succour, instead of nailing it to the cross.

Our position at the present day, my brethren, is much more advantageous than that of the Jews. They had in some sort to divine the Messiah, and their mind did not recognise him in Jesus, unless their heart beat for him. We, on the contrary, see him fully revealed. His august figure occupies the centre of the sacred writings, and that so clearly that to

him our eyes are unavoidably carried. Owing to that clearness we can no longer err while reading the Bible, after the manner and in the degree of the Pharisees; and in this assembly there is, I am sure, no one who would consent to repeat the curse against Babylon, which I cited a little while ago. Whether practically we forgive others as we hope to be forgiven, we know that we are required to follow Christ, and not David, and so ought to bless our enemies instead of cursing them. Nevertheless though the light of the revelation of God in Christ is so clear and penetrating, to us also the Bible may prove a source of error rather than truth. The moment you do not read it exclusively in order to find there the life eternal. You seek in it something that it neither contains nor offers, and so enter on a wrong and perilous path.

The life eternal of which the Bible speaks is not merely what is called the life to come, or the life beyond the grave; it is complete, perfect, divine life; it is the life of God in the soul of man; it is such a life as that which Christ lived; it is at once consummate virtue and consummate happiness. In a word, it is man's highest good. The sacred Scriptures present that eternal life to you and to the world—that they present and nothing more, nothing less: they present it in shewing you the image of Christ; in that image the life eternal is fully manifested. We possess a real, or rather, a personal knowledge of God in Christ, and only of God in Christ, and we know Christ only by the Bible. The sole object of the Bible is to bear witness to the Saviour, and in him to open to us the inexhaustible fountain of the life which is eternal because divine. You who labour and are heavily laden, hasten hither to the living fountain. You who thirst for love, and who hitherto have found only indifference, or even cruel misconceptions, hasten to the cross and contemplate that perfection of love, abandoned by all, betrayed by one of his own

circle, and who cries, "Happy those who weep, for they shall be comforted." You who courageously struggle for the truth, and obtain in reward of your labours only opprobrium and calumny, look at that head crowned with thorns, listen to the man of sorrows while he pronounces a beatitude on you,—hear his blessed words and rejoice and leap for joy. You who sink beneath a sense of your sins, and who under that heavy load are unable to set a single step toward good, behold how he lifts up the sinful woman simply because she loved much. Whatever your trouble (and is there one among you who has not at least one secret wound?) in the Bible you will find comfort and strength, for there, in every part, you will find the Saviour of the world. But, once more, look for nothing else, expect nothing else. Otherwise you will be disappointed, and may be misled.

A fundamental error committed by many is, that they seek in the Scriptures science far more than life. So has it been in all ages. You remember that Romanist theologians, relying on some words of the Old Testament declared that anterior to all exploration, they knew that the earth was not and could not be a sphere, and so did their best to prevent an enterprising navigator from sailing to make the discovery of the new world. In our own days also you see pious men laboriously collect from the Bible notions on Natural History and Comparative Grammar. What will such notions do for our salvation? Better far to know God, to know Christ, to know our own heart. The Ever-living One has not drawn up for us in Scripture, a manual of Natural History, nor a manual of Astronomy, nor a manual of Geology, nor a manual of Mental Philosophy, for the simple reason that he has placed us in a condition for studying these sciences by, and for ourselves. Had he judged it good to have given us all these ready made to our hands, be sure he would not have

presented them in enigmas, in obscure passages, passages in which the critic finds either no certain sense, or this sense today and that sense tomorrow. Do not degrade the Bible to that degree. It speaks to you of things infinitely more important than all the sciences united—it teaches you your duty and your destiny; it discloses to you your sinful condition, and it reveals to you the Saviour.

So little has the Bible intellectual enlightenment in view, that it occupies itself but very indirectly with our theological instruction. While indeed the questions are religious, so far as they stand in intimate connection with life, the Scripture is perfectly transparent, and immeasurably deep,—but it quits you the moment you touch the land of speculation. Very clearly does it tell us that God is our Father, and the Father of our Lord Jesus; that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; that God is spirit and dwells in our hearts. But when you begin to discourse on the persons in the trinity, know and be assured that you quit the Bible, and speak a tongue that it does not speak. If instruction in dogma had been the object of Scripture, do you not think it would have expounded it methodically, as is done in catechisms and systems of divinity? We should have had an epistle or a discourse on God, another on sin, a third on redemption. But never does the Great Teacher handle these subjects in an abstract manner; incessantly does he speak of them, but in the most-directly practical point of view. The Apostles do the same. One of the epistles of Paul indeed is a theological treatise—the Epistle to the Romans, where he sets forth the doctrine of free grace, where he unfolds the doctrine that men are justified by faith and not by works, and where he cites the example of Abraham in support of his views. Now, true as the doctrine is when scripturally understood, yet, as if to show that every formula is too narrow, and that religious truth sur-

passes all dogma, the same spirit that was in Paul led James to write that men are justified not by faith alone, but by works, and that it was so with Abraham, whose case Paul cites for a testimony. What ! is there then a contradiction between the Apostles on a point of such gravity ? Yes, in the terms, in the formula, the contradiction is patent ; but above and beyond the terms, above and beyond the formula, there is a unity of spirit ; man is justified by faith, that is, by that supreme act, by which we divest ourselves of our own imperfect righteousness, and give up ourselves to God to be clothed upon with the righteousness which is of God in Christ ;—but then faith is an act, a deed, a work, the greatest and the most pregnant of works, and so it is equally true that God saves us and that with God's aid we save ourselves. You see, the Bible does not undertake to supply us with formulas, since here having given a formula by one apostle, it takes it away by another ; or, in other words, it completes by Peter the doctrine which it taught by Paul. Faith is one side and works another of the christian life. Faith lays the foundation and works builds the superstructure, and both faith and works are of God from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. So far for the positive teaching of these two great lights of the Church. Negatively, man is not saved by works though he cannot be saved without works, for how can my virtue in time, how perfect soever, gain for me either the right or the power to live the blessed life of eternity ? But my works are in no case any thing but imperfect, defective, very imperfect and very defective. Not fulfilling the law, even the law of my own conscience, they entail condemnation, and so I am thrown on my desire to do God's will, that is on my faith, as the sole tenable ground of my acceptance with God. Conscious of my own emptiness, I cast myself on the infinite fulness, and so am received and enriched, not for what I am but for what

I would be, and shall at last be forgiven and welcomed into life, not for what I have done so much as for what I desire; not for my conformity to law so much as for my tenderness and trustingness of spirit.

The pains I have taken to explain this doctrine and to reconcile its two diverse expositions, are enough to prove that the Bible does not offer these words and forms as the bread of life which every man must eat or die. Indeed, so simple is the Gospel itself, that dogmatic expositions are almost as useless as they are needless. The great themes are, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and I will give you rest; Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." What need then of lengthy creeds and dogmatical systems? The publican Zaceheus, the woman that was a sinner; the loving Mary and the busy Martha needed no Rabbi, needed no Rabinnical treatise in order to feel and know their wants, or to see in Jesus the fulness of that fatherly spirit which fills all in all. His presence sufficed for them and ought to suffice for us. What? his presence is not with us? Yes, even more fully than with them is the Son of God before our eyes, in the Gospel, which narrate his words, recount his deeds and reproduce his life;—in the epistles, which show us the Saviour in the love, the fidelity and the heroism with which he inspired his followers, making them strong to overcome the world. In both the Gospels and the Epistles the light and the power which God gives are found in facts and in lives, and not in abstract doctrines.

No more are you to take Scripture as a manual of morality, which shall in every circumstance dictate your conduct by a command at once brief and decisive. Had God intended to give us such a manual, he would have drawn it up differently; for he does all with consummate wisdom. Instead of the fragmentary and occasional narratives which fill the Bible, he

would have laid out his orders on a regular plan, according to our several faculties and conditions, and according to our different duties; and afterwards he would have detailed the laws in which those duties were modified or suspended by others. Books of the kind exist. They are called Collections of Cases of Conscience. You may think them convenient. You hesitate between two commands. You consult your guide, you learn your duty. But do you perform it? Jesus came not to teach casuistry, which has always proved a dead letter, and generally been no less baneful than inert; but to call forth and to foster in his disciples the principle of moral life, which, when once strong and active, gives power as well as light, for it is the word of God in man's soul. The purpose of Jesus is to quicken and discipline conscience, not to supersede it; he intends to call forth its activity, not to spare us the trouble of reflexion and the responsibility of choice. Mark in what style Jesus has taught his morality, and then say whether the Bible gives itself out for a code of laws: "If any man sue thee at law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Matt. v. 39, 41). A code of laws does not speak in figures. Then either the gospel is not a code of laws, or you must take these commands to the letter. But who does so? Not those who are loudest for the jot and tittle infallibility, and the all over-riding authority of every word of Scripture. Take another example: "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 26). You hear; Christ commands you to trample under foot the most sacred obligations; yes, he commands you to pluck out your right eye; to cut off your

right hand, if they cause you to do wrong; yes, he promises you that with a grain of faith you might say to a sycamore tree, Be thou plucked up by the root and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. (Luke xvii. 6). Do you not see that he that spake as never man spake has purposely given to his thought a manifest exaggeration to arrest your attention, to compel you to think, and to lead you to distinguish in his discourses between the substance and the form, the letter which killeth and the spirit which giveth life. Well knowing how inclined men are to a blind and doltish submission, he employs real paradoxes with a view to scatter our idleness, to rouse us from our torpor, to break our chains, and make us true freedmen of the Lord. The passages cited are not true if taken literally, but they are true in aim and spirit; they open to your conscience new aspects of duty, disclose to it a superior virtue, and convey in each case, a great and everlasting principle, founded on a great and everlasting law of our spiritual life. And all the Bible has thus for its object, to awaken our slumbering moral ideal, to give us wings by which to mount to heaven. In a word, Christianity attaches little importance to this act or that, compared with the inspiration and the regeneration of our whole inner man. As its doctrine consists in the portrait which it gives us of the Saviour, so does its morality consist in our transformation into the likeness of that Saviour—for this is life eternal.

O that you, my brethren, may read the Bible as God, its giver, wishes it to be read, not as a collection of curious instructions respecting the earth and the skies, respecting angels and demons, respecting the origin of the world and its final destiny; not as a collection of precepts and counsels for gaining a good position either in the present world or the future! Rather ask of it the satisfaction of your deepest and most pressing wants—ask of it forgiveness, sanctification,

peace, joy, trust,—in a word, God: and for the rest say to yourself in confidence, this is a form more or less indifferent which the God's Spirit had made use of in order to be understood in ages of slumber and partial light. Do not, as did the Jews, confound the necessary with the essential; do not by a servile attachment to the letter, lose the priceless benefit of divine revelation.

A choice must be made in Scripture. But that does not mean that you have the right to take this and leave that, as you please—to take what suits your prejudices, your tastes, your moral deadness and perversities; and thus to turn over the leaf, when you meet with things that are unpalatable. Much profit of a truth would you gain from so reading the Bible—introducing into it your weaknesses, your littlenesses, your evil desires, your illusions—in a word, yourselves. The Bible can be useful to us and conduct to life only by differing from us, by surpassing us, by raising us above our ordinary level. To reduce it to that level, to fashion it after our own likeness, is to take from the salt its saltiness. Here then is the rule which should direct your choice in the Scriptures; receive, as coming directly from God, the words which at the same time humble and strengthen you. In other words, cleave to the narratives, to the exhortations, to the instructions which either disclose to you the state of your own heart with its numerous wants, or make you understand better the character of the Lord Jesus with his perfect sanctity and his boundless pity. All is there—in those two things—all, for all religious knowledge, and all religious power is summed up in this, namely, to know ourselves and to know the Saviour. When Luther, wishing to give to the Reformation a divine basis, published his translation of the Bible, he prefixed to it an excellent preface, in which are these words; “I hold,” said he, “to the books which present to me Christ

purely and clearly ;” and these he designated as “the Gospel of John, the Epistles of Paul to the Romans, to the Galatians, the Ephesians, and the First Epistle of Peter. These (he adds) are the books which show you Christ, and teach you all that you require for knowledge and felicity.” Let the choice of Luther be or be not the most evangelical; if our Christianity is to resume any vigour, we must apply ourselves to read the Scriptures in the spirit of the great Reformer, seeking there in perfection nothing but Christ, as the life eternal: Christ the way, the truth and the life.

Then will disappear those narrow sectarian tendencies which are mining the Protestant Church. Men will cease to ascribe supreme importance to their own particular forms of opinion, which they fancy they have drawn from the Bible, but which, when traced to their true source, turn out to be speculations borrowed from obsolete philosophies, or fancies spun in the hard, dry and dark brain of some theologising speculator or speculative theologer; and to which the infinite variety of the Bible has only lent a costume, or given a colouring. Because the attire is in word partly Biblical, its wearer and his adherents think themselves justified to condemn, as enemies to the word of God, whosoever does not accept them as the very path of life. When once we have learnt to distinguish between the substance and the form, these reveries lose their venerable mask, the public conscience recognises them for what they really are, and while their supporters may continue to proclaim them as the veritable balm of Gilead, they are unable to impose them on others with authority, and end by becoming either more wise or very harmless. Then also the piety of the poor in spirit, the piety of God’s weaklings, will in truth be no less touching and mighty than simple. As it is, how often have we seen a servant, a labouring man, who, suddenly aroused by the preach-

ing of the gospel, and becoming alive to his real condition and his true interests, began to read the Bible assiduously. Drawn on by pernicious example he seeks in the Scripture, not simple edification, but science; he wants to fathom all mysteries; to rise to all knowledge; he mixes all in hopeless confusion,—the Old Testament with the New, the word of the Lord with the word of his witnesses and servants; the teachings of the Book of Life with those of the leaders of his sect, and so he fabricates a kind of theological system, very narrow, very absurd, very anti-christian; in which, what is of man darkens and overpowers what is of God; and which in the very degree in which the earthly eclipses the heavenly, he defends with zeal and supports by anathemas, while running—now to this side, now to that—after gladiatorial discussions and theological pugilism; striking out right and left against every gainsayer, and showing himself ten times more irreligious than he was before what he calls his conversion. Alas! alas! this is what the piety of the simple too often becomes. On every step of the social ladder you encounter these little theologers,—they may be men, they may be women—who pervert the word of God; who transmute it into an arsenal of arguments and a treasury of excommunications. There is more than one drawing room where frivolous talk is intermingled with heavy dissertations on grace, on redemption, on plenary inspiration; there is many a grand lady who has no other desire than to shine by the unrivalled splendour of her raiment, and by the spotless purity of her orthodoxy. O how sad is this! my brethren, how sad is this!

But you who are truly religious, you who are deeply in earnest; who open the Bible really for your own edification; who read it solely that you may become better men, women, and children—do you study it with sufficient simplicity? Easily may you ascertain. You have only to ask yourselves if your

faith in the Bible is joyous, serene, free from fear. An affection makes us happy only then when it is accompanied by full and entire confidence; the moment you doubt your friend, that you fear to find him faithless, you are seized by cutting grief, and lose all your moral energy. Now, do you never fear to see the gold of the Scripture grow dim before your eyes? When the geologists scrutinise the surface of the earth; when hardy explorers disinter the ruins of Nineveh; when historians re-cast the dates of the past, and, aided by philosophers, throw back the origin of the present state of their globe thousands of years, and the origin of the globe itself beyond all calculation; when the learned examine with microscopic eye, every page, every word, every line, of the biblical text, to see if everything is as it was in the beginning, and as it should be now, then, and for ever—nothing added, nothing taken away, nothing changed; and when you are told that variations exist by thousands, and great losses have to be acknowledged, and some corruptions to be confessed, and, if possible, corrected;—then do you follow these investigations and hear these statements with a certain fear if not disquiet, as if the final issue might not be damaging to the Bible? In this case, your faith is not the true faith; and by your own fault, the Bible, far from supporting you during your pilgrimage, is to you a reed, which bends and breaks, and pierces your hand, instead of God's rod and staff on which you may confidently and securely lean.

For me, my brethren, the word of God contained in the Bible is beyond all attack. Whatever may now or hereafter be the progress of science, I know that to the end of time this volume will enshrine the fount of eternal life. Never will it be proved that the spirit which flows and overflows there, is not superior to the truest, the grandest, the divinest of all that man can do or get out of his own resources. Everywhere

else I feel myself the equal of existing authorities—intellectual authority, social authority, religious authority; here, I bow my head, my knee, my heart; here, for here in the Bible I find God; so much holiness humbles me; so much love wins and yet overpowers me; so much pity first lifts me up, and then casts me down. O divine word! by thee am I judged; by thee am I condemned; by thee am I forgiven; by thee am I comforted; by thee am I cherished, fed, strengthened, and saved. Come into my heart with all thy power; come and lead me to Christ; come and fill me with God's spirit; come and transform me into the image of the Son of God, that I may have present and everlasting communion with the Father and the Son.

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE GOSPEL.

BY T. COLANI.

The Lord Jesus has said, that the Gospel was hidden from the wise and revealed unto babes and sucklings (Matt. xi, 25 ; Luke x. 21). It thus appears that children are superior to us, in as much as they have a certain quality which it is necessary to possess, in order to benefit at all by the lessons of the Gospel.

It is not the superiority of intelligence, for the intelligence of children is unformed, and therefore not capable of reasoning or of understanding any thing which is not visible and sensible. Attempt to explain the simplest things to them,—I do not speak of any abstract problem, or philosophical idea, or rule of calculation ; but try to give them a faint idea of a simple phenomenon, a mechanical contrivance, or a plain tool—you fail, they do not understand a word of your explanations, unless you place before them some tangible substance which represents your idea. It is clear, then, that Christianity (since it professes to be especially adapted to the comprehension of children) cannot be abstruse, is not merely a collection of definitions, much less is it contained in any doctrine or system. What would a poor child do with those abstractions, those solutions and definitions, those dogmas and formularies ? His blooming form shrinks before these great words ; and if you say he must repeat them, he will listen to you with a stupified air, and then burst out into a fit of crying.

Neither do I think that the superiority of children consists in their moral strength. For instance, has not your child, when punished again and again for a bad habit, promised sincerely and earnestly to correct himself; never to do it again, he is quite sure? But the repentant tears are hardly dry, before he is again tempted, and yields without much resistance. Pleasure has a great fascination for young spirits: a fascination which to us seems incredible, to us who have so much difficulty in finding any joy in this weary world. Evidently, then, if children are peculiarly capable of practising Christianity, it must contain something more than a list of commands and prohibitions, such as the Decalogue, a collection of moral counsels, maxims and sentences: therefore Christianity must require from mankind something more than heroic virtue. Nothing is less stoical than a child; and we know how little exhortations and remonstrances have the power of captivating him.

Inferior to us in intelligence and force of will, children are our equal in feeling. A child loves as soon as he is conscious of life; and under some circumstances his power of loving far surpasses ours. He is more instinctive, less reasoning, less dependent on his mind than we are. He loves without knowing why; he loves because he feels the necessity of it, because his mother's love excites in him a feeling of acknowledgement which overflows; and because his friends are very good to love him. Besides his affections are blended with everything surrounding him incessantly; when he sleeps, when he wakes, when he is hungry, when he suffers, when he is happy, when he calls to his mother, and not happy unless within her arms. Above all, the affection of a little child is so full of trust and confidence; it is this which clothes him with a grace which has no parallel. We seniors hardly ever succeed in complete self-forgetfulness. In our most lively effusions we reserve some

hidden nook, from which we never come out ; where we cling to ourselves, fearing that if we slacken the hold we shall lose entirely our independence. The child has no doubt ; he loves as you can love only a being who seems to you quite perfect.

This then is the superiority of children over the wise, to which Jesus alluded. In other words, the Gospel is not an affair of the reason, but an affair of the heart. It wishes to produce in us a profound and absorbing affection, as confiding as that of a child for its mother. And what must be the object of this affection ? Evidently a person ; for an institution, a system, a creed, would not inspire us with such a sentiment. Instead of dogmas, the Gospel gives us a person to contemplate ; because Christ being entirely divine, the more we study his life, the better shall we understand divine things. For abstract morality, we find a person to imitate ; for there is no virtue wanting in the anointed of the Eternal. Instead of a form of worship, we find ourselves in the presence of a person to love ; for in loving Christ we shall become participators of the spirit of holiness which will regenerate us.

The gospels are the biography of a man who lived eighteen centuries ago. You read it as you would read any other narrative ; but I know not how, this man has a secret charm, which so attracts, so moves, and so governs you, that you cannot refuse to give him your heart. Little by little you adopt all his thoughts, you experience all that he experienced, and behold ! you are transformed into the image of a wise man and a prophet shall I say ? No, but into the image of God himself, for this unknown one, this sage, this prophet, is the perfect man, the Son of God. Sublime simplicity of Christianity ! provided the heart be entirely subdued, the rest appears indifferent. Consider how little importance the Master attaches to all speculative questions. Remember, how at the well of Sychar, the Samaritan woman having recognised him

as a prophet, hastens to lay her scruples before him, and to ask him whether she ought to follow the manner of worship of Samaria or that of Jerusalem; whether it was right to pray on Mount Gerizim or on Mount Zion. What does he reply? "Woman, you worship what you know not, we worship what we know." He then well knows on what side truth and reliable tradition are found. "But," adds he, "the hour cometh when ye shall worship the Father neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem, for the Father requires that ye worship him in spirit and in truth." Ah! if it is science which saves, if salvation depends on the exact knowledge of a revealed doctrine, if one can only enter the kingdom of God by a sort of theological examination, then, alas! we do well to lament; and I do not know which would be the more deplorable—the weak, who are never sure of having understood aright, or the strong, who might think they are excluded from Heaven by an inexorable doubt which stands before them like the flaming cherubim at the gates of Eden. Or again, if salvation is the result of our own efforts, the reward which crowns a holy life, we lose all hope of obtaining it, for each step that we take is marked by a fall. But as it is sufficient to love, to enter by Christ into the communion of life with the Eternal, we may be saved—the strong and the weak, the virtuous and the sinful, the wise and the ignorant. We must only take care not to shut our eyes to the light, we must admit that the Supreme Beauty is worthy of our affection, and declare that the lessons taught by the Gospels have done us good, and raised us above ourselves. In a word, we must not contend against the sanctifying influence of Christ, but accept it with the confiding trust of a child.

Is it possible that Christianity is as simple as I have pictured it? Is it really sufficient to give our hearts without burdening our memories with subtleties, without inclosing our

intellects within narrow limits, without submitting our wills to capricious commands? The Lord Jesus says so, it is true, but I can understand why men should hesitate; for if Christianity is in the least degree a natural thing, or a light burden, we must conclude that what is generally presented under the name of Christianity is altered and falsified to the greatest extent.—When you visit a library, look at the books entitled “An abridgement or Summary of the Christian religion;” you would expect to find a brief treatise, shorter even than the New Testament. They are a large series of immense volumes, for the Gospel of the theologians is so confused, that it requires thousands of pages to elucidate it. It seems, alas! as if man cannot refrain from retouching the work of God. This arises from various causes. In the first place, we do not examine the Gospels without already having some opinions which are dear to us; involuntarily we attribute them to Jesus, and we persuade ourselves that they form part of his teachings. Truly, we are not able to find any trace of them in his conversations, but we are so sure of the fact, that we never think of verifying it. It is thus that many Catholics, diligent readers of the Bible, are very much astonished when we show them that the Gospel does not enjoin worship of images, confession, or the sacrifice of the mass. In the second place, we have an instinctive fear of what is vague and undefined, and we desire to possess for each question, a complete, precise, and clearly defined answer. That the Gospel should be in essence a sentiment, seems to us unintelligible; for after all how can we prove that it is necessary to love, how define affection, how justify trust? We must have something more positive, something which will speak plainly to our senses.

These and many other causes have been in action from the commencement of the Church. Truly may we declare that in

no age has she fully accepted the worship in spirit and in truth, or the Christianity of children, not even in the age of the apostles. Open the epistles of St. Paul, and you will see there how he struggles incessantly against the deplorable tendency of new converts to complicate the Gospel with outward observances and dogmas. The Galatians admit without doubt that a man is justified by faith; but they think it safer to add the necessity of circumcision; and they supplement the message of Christ with requirements taken from Moses. The Colossians think it necessary, in order to be good Christians, to celebrate the Sabbath, to observe the days of the New Moon, and to abstain from certain kinds of food. Moreover, carried away by a foolish desire to know the secrets of the other world, they search for revelations about angels, about their functions, and their ranks, nor do they hesitate to introduce notions into the body of christian doctrine. In truth, if Paul was not there to reprimand and correct them, the gospel would have disappeared in the first generation behind a mass of superstitions.

Afterwards, the Fathers of the Church occupy the place of the vigilant guardians, and doubtless they try to remove from our divine religion all that could alter its august simplicity. Alas! to preserve it pure, they believe it indispensable to surround it with things that have nothing to do with it. Christ said "Call no one your master." Frightened at this anarchical counsel, the venerable doctors never cease to say to the faithful, "Take, take the bishops for guides and masters, accept their orders as the orders of God himself." Christ says, "Come to me with the trust of a little child, and you will find rest for your souls." "Yes, go to him," repeat those good shepherds, "but remember that he is obliged to repulse without mercy, whoever wanders from the fixed doctrine of our councils; whoever doubts that the Son is consubstantial

with the Father; whoever refuses to acknowledge the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity; whoever is bold enough to confound the persons of the Deity or to divide the substance. These terms seem barbarous, but they are necessary for salvation, and unless you say them again and again, you are cast at once into the fire which is never quenched. "My yoke is easy" says the Master, and requires no other condition than a humble heart. "Humiliation of heart is very good," so the successors of the apostles decree, but it will not be amiss to join to it various external things, such as penances, fastings, mortifications, liberal almsgiving, to the Church; or better still, the one of living without family or pleasure in the depth of a monastery. Jesus did not say so exactly, but these things so evidently form part of true Christianity, that he must have intended them, even as he intended all the ceremonies of our cathedrals, all the hierarchy of our clergy, and all the dogmas of our theologians."

At the sight of these grave doctors, who, in the name of Christ, so entirely falsify the Gospel, we can hardly repress a bitter smile. Nevertheless, we Protestants, is our Christianity a more simple, true, and natural religion than theirs? Does it sum up every thing in ardent love; have we not supplemented the Gospels with superstitions and extraneous things? We no longer believe in the necessity of circumcision, nor in the efficacy of fasts and vows; but would it be a very difficult thing to draw up a long list of practices and observances which seem to us as essential as faith in Christ? I do not intend to examine whether these practices and habits are salutary or not, but I ask whether we do not make them a condition of salvation, in direct contradiction to Christ? Let us be honest. To be a Christian in our eyes, you must admire our favourite authors, and use the language of devotion common in our circles. And in point of doctrine, do we remain

faithful to the spirit of the Gospel? When a man drinks the water of the Gospel, do we then account him orthodox? Is it not true on the contrary, that each one has a pet doctrine of his own, which he protects and forces on every body; in which he sees the first and last word of the Glad Tidings. With one it is the literal interpretation of Scripture, with another the doctrine of eternal punishment, with a third the speedy return of Christ to judge the living and the dead, with a fourth it is something else; but each thus shuts himself up in a corner which he cultivates with care, and which hides from him the light of the vast field of God.

Such narrowness, may however be allied with a kind of liberality. They will give you up all other points of doctrine, but they are intractable upon this one; they close heaven against those who do not sign their confession of faith, and they display an energy the more indomitable, the more worthless the question at issue. This fault is very general; only here and there do you find an exception.

Alas! our Christianity is very different from that which Jesus recommended. Our Christianity is all but entirely an affair of the intellect, and not an affair of the heart; a heavy yoke, under which the reason bends, not a balm which refreshes the soul. And that is the reason it is not simple. But what am I saying? Do not the Christians of our day pique themselves particularly on their child-like faith? To all objections which call forth their remarks and prejudices, they oppose this argument, "Oh yes, my manner of seeing things is absurd, nevertheless, I have the simplicity to hold it fast; God has had the grace not to embarrass me with your reasonings."

What an unworthy parody on simplicity, this absurd point of view in which you persist. Know that you did not receive it from Christ. You have received it from some fallible man, very fallible; or perhaps you have invented it yourself

by your continual refinements. When then you close your eyes to evidence, you are guilty of a serious and common fault, namely, obstinacy. And this obstinacy is the more culpable, because you give it the guise of confidence in Christ. If you were truly animated by the spirit of trust which characterises children, if you clung to the words of Jesus with their joyous assurance, your first and last thought would be to rid yourself of your delusions, instead of clinging to them obstinately. You would labour to render your mind independent of human authorities, so that it might become the truthful mirror of the mind of Christ. Every pretended religious idea which is not expressly contained in the gospels, you would reject without hesitation as at best useless, and as not having any right to the title of Christian. Your most ardent desire would be to revise your faith and concentrate your trust on Christ.

JOHN CALVIN.

BY ERNEST RENAN.

M. Jules Bonnet, already well known by excellent works on the history of the Reformation, and in particular by a very interesting biography of Olympia Morata, has lately published in two volumes a collection of the letters of Calvin, written in French.* This valuable correspondence had not been before collected in a complete manner. "About to return to God," as Theodore Beza states, "John Calvin, constantly occupied with the interests of the Church, put into my hands his treasure, that is a vast mass of papers, expressing a desire that if among them there was anything likely to be useful to the Church, it should be given to the public." This dying wish of the apostle obtained in the sixteenth century only an imperfect fulfilment. The contests which engrossed all the activity of men's minds, the catastrophies and massacres which ensued immediately on the demise of the reformer, and still more the scruples of respectful admirers, absorbed at once in the accommodations due to contemporaries, and in the regard claimed by a memory which was dear to them—all contributed to delay the task bequeathed by Calvin to his friends. No longer have we reason to regret the postponement, since a young and laborious historian has, with the care of a disciple

**Lettres de Jean Calvin* recueillies pour la première fois et publiées d'après les manuscrits originaux ; Lettres françaises. 2 Vol. Paris : C. Meyrueis.

and the exactness of a scholar, brought together into one, those archives of the cradle of his faith. The labours of Mons. Bonnet leave only one desire unfulfilled, namely, that a collection of the letters written in Latin should as soon as possible be added to the volumes consecrated to those which are written in French. Calvin's letters are historical documents. We under-value them if we seek therein only a literary interest; we misapply them if we make of their contents a book of piety.

Is the character of Calvin, such as it results from these new sources of information, sensibly different from that which could be traced from the lights of history and the parts of his correspondence already published? There would be some exaggeration in an affirmative answer. Calvin was one of those absolute characters, fused as a whole at once, whom you see entire at the first glance—a letter, an act suffices to show you the man. No fold in that inflexible soul—which never knew doubt or hesitation. The natures which reserve for history unexpected secrets, and which at each posthumous revelation show themselves under new aspects are those rich and flexible natures which, superior to their course of action, their destiny and even their opinions, deliver themselves to the world only by halves, and always keep a mysterious side, by which they freely communicate with the infinite.

God, who abandons the world to the strong and the violent, nearly always refuses to them the gifts of subtilty, which alone lead to truth in speculation. Truth is all in nice shadings; now in order to exercise a powerful influence in the world, you must have no eye for fine distinctions; you must believe that you only are in the right, and that those who think differently from you are wholly in the wrong.

The mind which is void of passion and delicate in its perceptions, the mind which is critical toward itself, sees the weak sides of its own cause, and on certain occasions is tempted

to be of the opinion of its adversaries. On the contrary, the man who is positive and heated in his opinions, boldly identifies his cause with that of God, and acts with the daring which naturally springs from such self-confidence. To him the world belongs; and in some sense, justly, for the world moves on solely under the impulse of characters so firm and resolute. Nevertheless, to such the luxuries of thought are denied; they never behold truth in its pure form; duped by themselves, they die and pass away without having attained genuine wisdom.

More than any other person, Calvin possessed this unbending rigour, which is the essential characteristic of the man of action. I doubt if you would find a more complete type of an ambitious soul, eager to gain sovereignty for his own thought, because he believes it true. No regard for riches, for titles, for honours; no display; a modest life, an apparent humility; every thing sacrificed to the desire of modelling others after his own image. I see only one person, Ignatius Loyola, who can dispute with Calvin the palm of self-assertion; but Loyola employed in the work a Spanish ardour, and a fervour of imagination, which have their beauty; ever did he remain a familiar reader of the *Amadis de Gaul*, pursuing after the chivalry of the world, spiritual chivalry; while Calvin has all the severities of the passion, without having any of its enthusiasm. He might be styled a sworn interpreter, arrogating to himself a divine right to determine what is christian and what is anti-christian. His correspondence lofty, grave, stoical, is totally destitute of grace; there is no life in it; never do you find there a spontaneous outburst, or an accent of the heart. His style is equally firm and nervous, but also dry, dead, confused, often obscure, doubtless because the terrors and the constraint of the age obliged him to utter himself inarticulately. It is said that

his Latin letters show him on a more tender side. In those now before me I observe nothing but rigour—a grave conviction, a saddened disposition, beholding sin every where, and regarding life as an expiation).—A single time, on occasion of the birth of a child, he tries to smile; but it is a strange outburst, which forthwith terminates in sadness: “It grieves me that I am not with you, at least for half a day, to laugh with you while they make the babe smile—but on the penalty of enduring his crying and weeping; for the life which is to end in smiles must begin in tears.”

It is surprising that a man, who in his life and in his writings shows himself so unsympathising, should have been in his day the centre of an immense movement, and that a temper so sharp and severe should have exercised a great influence on the mind of contemporaries. How, for example, could one of the most distinguished women of his time, Renée de France, surrounded, in her court at Ferrara, by the flower of the first minds of Europe, be smitten with this severe master, and be engaged by him in a course which was spread with so many thorns? You cannot exert this kind of austere seduction, except when you are deeply in earnest with opinions. Without that lively, profound, sympathetic ardour, which was one of the secrets of Luther's success, without the charm and perilous attractions of François de Sales, Calvin gained success because he was the most Christian man of his age, in an age and a country that were bent on a Christian re-action.—Even moroseness was a condition of his success, for persons seriously religious are gained more easily by severity than laxity; they prefer narrow and rough roads to broad and easy ones, and the surest means to attach them to you is to require much from them without appearing to concede to them anything. Need I add, that for the essential qualities of uprightness, honour and sincerity, the

correspondence published by M. Bonnet completely clears the Reformer from the calumnies invented by hate and party spirit? Two letters fabricated by a clumsy forger with a view of sullyng Calvin's memory, and which superficial historians, following in the steps of Voltaire, not only accept but propagate, have been successfully shown to be apocryphal. If the argumentation of M. Bonnet on this point was not conclusive it would find a decisive confirmation in the new researches of M. Charles Read on the subject, researches founded on a comparison of the pretended autographs of Calvin with the documents which really issued from his hand.*

Intolerance was the inevitable consequence of the character and position of Calvin. Whenever a man allows himself to be mastered by an opinion which he holds to be a complete, absolute and evident truth, to such an extent that you are guilty if you do not accept it, he is of necessity intolerant. At the first view Calvin offers a strange contradiction in eagerly claiming liberty for himself and his associates while sternly refusing it to others. But in reality, all this is very simple; he believed differently from the Catholics, but he believed as absolutely as they.—What is now regarded as the essence of Protestantism in its birth, namely, freedom of belief, the right of each one to form his own creed, was scarcely known in the sixteenth century.—Doubtless that appeal from the Church to Scripture which was the soul of the Reformation, would not do otherwise than in the long run turn to the profit of criticism, and in this sense the first Reformers are the harbingers of free thought. But this they were without either knowing or wishing it. The Catholics have with some reason said of the French Revolution—"Effected against us, it has worked for us:" the philosopher may say the same of the Reformation.

History presents many instances in which the doctrines of a party, and the occult tendencies of that party are in full contradiction. In the quarrel of the Jesuits and Jansenists, the former maintained a doctrine more conformed to reason, and more respectful for liberty than that of the latter; and yet Jansenism was at the bottom a liberal movement, and so a movement around which honourable and cultivated men might naturally rally.

—This violent zeal which forces a man, strong in his own opinions, to seek the salvation of others by forcible means, and without any regard to the claims of mental freedom, shines out in the whole of Calvin's correspondence.— Writing to the Regent of England, during the ministry of Edward VI., he says, "As I learn, my lord, you have two sorts of rebels who raise themselves against the king and the kingdom; the one are fanatics who, under the pretext of serving the gospel, desire to throw everything into confusion; the others are devotees of the superstitions of the Roman antichrist. All of them well deserve to be put down by the sword which is entrusted to you, seeing they assail not only the king, but God, by whom the king has been placed on his throne, and has committed to you the protection as of his person so of his majesty." The model which he proposes to the regent, and afterwards to the King of England himself, is Josiah, King of Judah, who was designated by the prophet as him who should offer idolatrous priests on their own altar (1 Kings, xiii., 1 seq.; 2 Kings, xxiii.), and who is described as surpassing all other antecedent monarchs because he did his utmost to root out the priests of Baal. The example too which Calvin holds up for their fear and avoidance is that of the kings who, "having beaten idolators down did not utterly extirpate them," and who are reprov'd for failing "to destroy their chapels and other places of senseless devotion."—As the

Catholics, Calvin claims toleration not in the name of liberty but in the name of truth. When he entreats civil magistrates to punish "the incorrigible men who despise spiritual penalties, and those who profess new dogmas," he never once thinks that the same principle might be turned against himself, and, desiring to defend himself against the murder of Servetus, he writes with an untrembling hand this terrible title, *Defensio orthodoxæ fidei.....ubi ostendiur hæreticos jure gladii coercendos esse: A Defence of the orthodox faithin which it is shown that heretics must be put down by the use of the sword.*)

Violence of the kind astonished no one.* It was in some sort a common right. Bolsec violently driven from Geneva; Gruet beheaded; Gentilis for a time escaping from the scaffold by retractation; Servetus, suffering, under the eyes of Farel, his atrocious punishment; are not insulated acts, Bitterness and threatening flow into Calvin's pen as a natural sentiment; "Aware in part what sort of man he was;" so he writes in regard to some unknown person; "I should have wished he had rotted in some ditch, could it have been according to my desire, and his coming rejoices me as much as his who had pierced my heart with a poignard; and I assure you,

* This statement is too absolute. More than one powerful voice was raised in protest against the persecuting spirit. I give as a specimen words uttered by Luther "The repression of heresy belongs to the bishop not to the magistrate. For heretics can be restrained by no outward force. In consequence you must deal with them in a different manner than by the severity of the sword. The matter must be conducted with the Word of God. If you succeed not with that instrument, in vain do you apply worldly force, even if you fill all things with blood. Heresy is something of a spiritual nature, which can be consumed by no fire, nor washed out by any water; Solely by the Word of God can it be destroyed. So far are you from being able to root it up by violence, that you do but add strength to it thereby." See a scarce, interesting, and valuable piece published in 1554 by Sebastian Castellio under the Incognito of Martin Bellius, in which may be found the original whence I have made the above extract, an essay against persecution, by Castellio himself, the opinion of other eminent men of different ages to the same effect, and a refutation, by Basil Montfort, of the chief reasons adduced in behalf of the use of violence in spiritual things. The piece is entitled *De Hæreticis, an sint persequendi, et omnino quomodo sibi cum eis agendum.* The Editor.

madam, if he had not escaped so soon, it would not have been my fault that he was not consigned to the flames." You here recognise the terrible frankness of the man who in regard to Servetus wrote, *Si venerit, modo valeat mea auctoritas, vivum exire non patiar*; *If he come, provided my authority prevail, I will not allow him to go out alive*; of the man who, of his own accord, furnished to the Inquisition at Vienna proofs against that persecuted one, and sent to the Archbishop of Lyon the leaves of the book which was meant to kindle Servetus's funeral pile.* Not even death appeased him. Three years after the execution of Gruet, there was found in a garret an autograph work in which the rebellious canon expressed with rage and despair the thoughts which in better times he would have had the right to express with calmness and wisdom. Calvin, not thinking the work punished sufficiently by the death of its author, caused it to be burnt by the hand of the public executioner, and drew up its condemnation with his own hand. Instead of the pity called for by the dreams of an exasperated mind, repaying persecution by violence of language, he has nothing but anger for what he calls "blasphemies so execrable that there is no human being but ought to tremble at hearing them." This unhappy man, fated to die for the guilt of saying in bad style in the sixteenth century, what was said in good style in the nineteenth, is in the eyes of Calvin "the adherent of an infected and worse than diabolic sect—disgorging execrations, disgustingly offensive, infections so stinking as to taint a whole country, to such an extent that all people of conscience ought to ask pardon of God for such a blaspheming of his name."

The severities of Calvin in what regards private morals, astonish and wound us perhaps still more than those which

* See the essay of M. E. Saisset on Servetus in the *Revue des deux Mondes*; February and March, 1848.

were dictated to him by orthodoxy. Too much inclined to slight human liberty, and solely occupied with moral reforms, he in every way took a false view of the function of the state, and made Geneva into a kind of theocratic republic which was governed by the ministers of religion, and in which a Protestant Inquisition extended itself to the whole of man's existence. "The condition of men's souls" in Geneva in the sixteenth century, held the same rank as it holds in Spain in our days. (An annual visitation from house to house was set on foot, to question the people as to their faith, and to discriminate between the ignorant and the learned on one side, and believers on the other.) The most embittered strokes of irony came from the pen of our reformer against that party of *libertines*, who offered an effectual opposition to his rigours; "There have certainly been some murmurs and menaces from the debauched creatures who cannot endure chastisement. Even the wife of him (Amédée de Perrin) who is about to pay you a visit, and writes to you from Beza, has arrogantly raised her voice. But she was compelled to seek the country because things did not go well for her in the city. The others lower their heads instead of raising their horns. There is one of them (Gruet) who is likely to pay very dear for his doings; I do not know that he will escape with his life. The young seem to have got the notion that I press them too hard. But it would be a pity if the rein were not kept tight on them. Accordingly it is a duty to secure their happiness, notwithstanding their opposition." And in another place; "Satan has here a pretty good number of tinder boxes and matches, but it will all end in smoke. The capital punishment inflicted on one of the set (Gruet) has well beaten down their pride. As to your guest (Amédée Perrin), I know not with what face he will look on us on his return. However his wife has done so much devilry that she has been obliged to flee to

the country. She has been absent about two months. When she comes back she will find it necessary to make no noise."

It would, however, be unjust to estimate the character of Calvin merely from these rigorous proceedings. Moderation and tolerance can hardly prevail in times which are ruled by absolute and ardent convictions. Persuaded that a sound creed is the supreme good, a good in comparison with which this earthly existence is a small matter, each party is naturally inexorable towards every other. Hence a terrible reciprocity. The man who makes light of his own existence and is ready to surrender it for his creed, is readily tempted to make light of the existence of others. Human life, of which moderate epochs are so justly sparing and careful, is sacrificed with a frightful prodigality. The abominable excesses of 1793 can be explained only by one of those crises in which human life falls, so to say, to the lowest price. A sort of frenzy seizes men's minds; they receive and inflict death with equal unconcern. Let us represent to ourselves the state of excitement in which the fervent apostle of the reformation must have lived, when from day to day he received from Paris, from Lyon, from Chambéry, news of the tortures endured by his fellow religionists. History has not sufficiently insisted on the atrocity of those persecutions, and on the resignation, the courage, the serenity of those by whom they were endured. There are in those scenes, pages worthy of the first ages of the Church, and I doubt not that a narrative, simple, touching, written from the documents and letters of the time—that such a narrative of those sublime combats would equal the ancient martyrology in beauty. The voice of Calvin, in these trying moments, ascends to a truly admirable elevation. His letters to the martyrs of Lyon, of Chambéry, to the prisoners in the Châtelet, sound like an echo of the heroic times of Christianity, of pages detached from the writings of Tertullian or Cyprian.

I allow that before I had been introduced by M. Bonnet into this blood-stained chamber of martyrs, I was not aware of the nobility of the victims, or the cruelty of their tormentors. Other persecutions have, without doubt, been more murderous. Philip ii. shed more blood. What persecutor does not lower his head in the presence of the Duke of Alba? But at least it was the faith of centuries which, in Spain and the Low Countries, fired the stake and erected the gallows. Those hecatombs, offered to what was considered religious truth, have their grandeur. But when Sardanapalus (the name given by Calvin, in his correspondence, to François Ier) in order to serve the interests of his policy, or to keep his pleasures undisturbed makes himself the avenger of a creed which he does not hold, he commits a crime at once odious and horrible. The absolute faith of Spain covers its funeral piles with a sort of poetry. You form a lofty idea of human nobility, when you see a barbarous man, given up to all the impetuosity of his instincts, prefer his religion to his life, and inflict and suffer death for what is to him the truth. But in seeing in a country overrun with indifference, a highly civilised country, noble women burned, infants put to torture, tongues cut out, scores of victims perishing in dungeons where they await their death, and the king, as a proof of his zeal, declaring that he was "not satisfied with his parliament of Paris, and causing his counsellors to be scolded as unconcerned and tardy because they did not burn men fast enough," who can avoid indignation? who can help, for a moment, doubting the moral value of a country which could permit so execrable a gambling with human life?

— Let us not be astonished if Calvin appears to us so severe, so bitter in his convictions, so intolerant towards the convictions of others. How can you believe by halves that for which you are proscribed? What vacillating faith does not become

fanatical under torture ?) The joy of suffering for your faith is so great that empasioned natures have been known to embrace opinions in order to have the pleasure of suffering for them. In this view persecution is an essential condition of all religious creations. It has a marvelous efficaciousness to fix ideas, to drive away doubts, and what is wrongly (in my opinion) called the scepticism of our times would yield under this energetic remedy. If we are timid, undecided; if we hardly believe our own ideas, we should be brought to a vivid, and active faith, were we to be subject to persecution. Let us not desire the medicine, for it might make us intolerant in our turn.

It admits of no question that the rigour of character which constituted Calvin's strength, obstructs the development of intelligence and excludes the flexibility of that mental freedom, which is drawn on in every way by the disinterested love of truth. But powerful action must be bought at that price, great though it is. (Largeness of mind founds nothing. It is narrow thoughts that unite men.) Men who build up churches are commonly as restricted in thought as they are unamiable in temper. One is at first surprised, in going through Calvin's letters, to find in them the correspondence of a statesman, charged with the details of business rather than that of a thinker or an asetic. Even his theology has no lofty range. Pretty much disengaged from scholasticism, more of a civilian than a theologian, Calvin, in producing the reformation he effected, yielded not so much to speculative considerations as to views of practical morality. His long professions of faith scarcely furnish a few lines which can be assimilated by the thought of our times; the creed has lost all its grandeur; the philosophy is feeble; all imagination, all poetry has disappeared. But to stop here would be unjust. What did it matter that Calvin was a poor philoso-

pher and theologian, if that very mediocrity was the condition of the work he was to accomplish? Would a solitary thinker have succeeded, as did he, in lightening the burden of the middle ages, and in boldly receding ten centuries in Christian history? In the same way, would Calvinism, without its strong aristocratic organisation, without the vigorous guardianship to which it subjected individual consciences, have successfully withstood the attacks which it underwent and have preserved in France an imperishable haven? (Strength is ordinarily gained only at the price of great sacrifices exacted from liberty, we and may hold that the endeavours of Calvin, disjoined from his sombre and austere character, would only, like so many others, have proved futile in presence of the enormous pressure exercised by Catholicism on the human mind.)

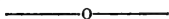
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